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Bachelor of International Business Administraation

STUDENT SATISFACTION AND ACADEMIC RANKINGS: DO THEY CORRELATE?

Study Advisory as an Alternative to Academic Rankings.

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THESIS
Abstract

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Abstract

This thesis and research was carried out on behalf of the product and service Study Advisory to discover if there are any connections between student satisfaction and academic rankings, and also to benchmark Study Advisory as an alternative to four well known and widely used academic rankings QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and CWTS Leiden Ranking.

The thesis was carried out in order to better understand the customer satisfaction of students, as well as to how their satisfaction can be measured and used for the marketing of universities that are not currently highly ranked on traditional rankings, or even ranked by them at all.

The research part of this thesis was carried out on a global scale using a survey about student satisfaction in April of 2016. The survey received 2049 responses from students of 77 nationalities, shedding light onto the level of satisfaction they have with the 231 universities that they represent. The company Study Advisory has already used the results of the research for their product development, marketing efforts and press releases in order to boost their global brand. The findings of this thesis will also be used in the future as a supportive tool for sales, marketing and branding efforts.

The conclusion of the thesis is that traditional academic rankings rarely express the satisfaction of a student from a students point of view, thus, there is a clear market for the Study Advisory Popularity Rating product, which ranks universities mostly on the satisfaction ratings of their current students and alumni.

Keywords
Student Satisfaction, Academic Rankings

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The following thesis has been commissioned in partnership of the author, a bachelor's degree student of international business administration at Savonia University of Applied Sciences, and the company Study Advisory, where the author carried out her professional work training during her studies.

The goal of this thesis is to find out whether or not traditional academic rankings correlate to student satisfaction, and to benchmark the product and services provided by the online product Study Advisory, as an alternative method for people worldwide to find a place to study when compared to traditional academic rankings.

The aims of this thesis and research are as follows:

- To highlight the trends and drivers of student mobility.
- To highlight customer satisfaction, and how it can be applied to students.
- To showcase the methodology of four major traditional academic rankings.
- To showcase the methodology of Study Advisory as an alternative to academic rankings.
- To carry out a research on student sastisfacion.
- To analyse the results to see if academic rankings and student satisfaction connect.
- To draw conclusions based on the theory and the research of the thesis.
- To provide Study Advisory with the results for marketing and development purposes.

This thesis will scale down the broad student target market specifically to international and mobility students, due to the ever-growing trend of globalisation in the higher education sector and student mobility. It will also highlight some of the key factors of student mobility and the satisfaction of international students, targeting the theory behind why students choose to study abroad.

Next, the author will give insight into how customer statisfaction is an important tool for the growth and development of a company, as well as how it is measured, and how these practices can be applied to the higher education industry directly in order to better assist higher education institutions in meeting the need of international students.

The thesis will scale down the widely available traditional university rankings to four of the more famous ranking providers: QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and CWTS Leiden Ranking, which are compared side by side to the Study Advisory Popularity rating on each unique university profile showcased on the Study Advisory platform.

The author will then present the online product and service offered by Study Advisory, giving detailed descriptions of its' many valuable features in order to better understand its' usage, and also to better understand its' similarities and differences to traditional academic rankings.

The thesis continues by analysing the results of the research generated by a global survey, which gathered the feedback of 2049 student respondents. The student respondents have given their opinions exclusively for this thesis on six important satisfaction indicators from their place of study: Teaching, Campus, Student Services, Internationality, Value for Money and Security. They have also voiced whether or not tradition academic rankings had anything to do with their decision to study at their higher education institution of choice.

These results will then be compared side by side to the rankings of QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and CWTS Leiden Ranking to see if there is any direct correlation between student satisfaction and traditional academic rankings. The level of satisfaction of students attending higher education institutions that are not listed in these four traditional academic rankings and the level of satisfaction of students attending higher education institutions that are listed in these four traditional academic rankings should become clear.

Finally, the author will draw conclusions based on the theory and the research of the thesis about the potential market for Study Advisory as an online product and service, how study advisory can positively affect the future of student mobility and satisfaction and how Study Advisory can use this thesis in their future marketing and development efforts.

How Study Advisory will use the results of this thesis and research:

- For supportive content to showcase on their marketing channels and website.
- To compile and publish all student reviews collected from the research to their platform.
- To carry out press releases for branding purposes.
- To further develop their product in the future based on trends in student mobility.

2 THE THEORY OF STUDENT MOBILITY

Recent findings from the frontline of global student mobility suggest that there are several factors that directly affect a student's decision to study a higher education in a country other than their own homeland. These factors can be social, cultural, political and even economical issues that the student is either already facing in their day to day life, preventing them from studying a higher education in their homeland, or issues that they are planning on embracing in order to better develop a future for themselves by studying abroad. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 19-20).

In the 10-year time frame from the year 2000 to the year 2010, the number of students who chose to study abroad has nearly doubled from 2.1 million to 4.1 million. During that time, the average rate of growth annually for students who chose to study abroad was about 7.2% according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, also known as OECD, but what exactly causes international students to study abroad in the first place? (Streitwieser 2014, p. 20; OECD 2012).

In this chapter, we will explore some of the most relevant factors that drive students to study abroad, and we will also explore a few of the factors that limit students from studying abroad. The goal of this chapter is to help the reader gain a clear understanding of what causes student mobility, and what directly affects the choices of an international student when finding the right place to carry out their studies.

2.1 Student Mobility Trends and Immigration Policy

The greatest number of students who chose to study abroad in 2000, making up for a grand total of 39% of all student mobility, chose to study in three steadily dominate countries: the United States (the destination of 23% of all student mobility), the United Kingdom (the destination of 11% of all student mobility) and Australia (the destination of 5% of all student mobility). (Streitwieser 2014, p. 21; OECD 2012).

However, within the 10-year time frame from the year 2000 to the year 2010, these numbers adjusted quite a bit. In fact, the number of students who chose to study abroad to these three locations slightly decreased to 37% of all student mobility. Only 17% of students who chose to study abroad did so in the United States. Meanwhile, the number of students who chose to study abroad in the United Kingdom rose to 13%, as well as in Australia to 7% of all student mobility. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 21; OECD 2012).

One reason for the slight change in direction of student mobility can be the political result of the unfortunate events of 9/11 in the United States, causing barriers in the form of tightening immigration policies. Another reason could also be that the immigration policies of the other two dominate countries of student mobility, the United Kingdom and Australia became more inviting. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 21; OECD 2012).

In fact, while the United States was tightening up the entry policies of its' international students with the help of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, the United Kingdom and Australia were starting to offer international students lower costs on academic fees, a very welcoming atmosphere and the promise of a chance to integrate into the local country and culture in order to stay long-term after their studies. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 21; OECD 2012).

The wonderful growth rate of student mobility to the United Kingdom and to Australia would also, however, inevitably see a decline with the global financial crisis of 2008. The shock brought on by the financial recession to higher education institutions and to the policy-making officials of the United Kingdom and Australia brought light upon two key issues of student mobility: The high ratio of international student when compared to domestic students, and the possible misuse and abuse of the visa's international students were given, which allowed them to remain in the United Kingdom and Australia for longer periods of time. These realisations led to the tightening of entry policies related to international students, which in turn, resulted in a lesser interest of student mobility to the United Kingdom and Australia, similarly to the situation of the United States just a few years prior. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 21-22; OECD 2012).

As can be seen in these examples, student mobility can vary and adjust according to the immigration policies of their host countries, and for the most part the higher education institutions, which in turn, suffer a drop in international atmosphere, cannot help that. None the less, it's a very clear example of one of the most important drivers for student mobility.

2.2 International Students and Economics

Some of the worlds fastest emerging markets are becoming more in need of a skilled workforce in order to facilitate their economical growth. For that reason, areas such as Asia, Africa and Latin America have been making more of an effort to compete on a global level for talented workers. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 23).

The best way to gain these skilled talents is to make these targeted areas of the developing world more attractive to students who choose to study abroad. This can be done by introducing policies that make it easier for a student to stay in the country of their international studies long-term after their graduation, or by offering a higher education to international students at a low cost, or even offering them their studies cost free. The integration of highly skilled and educated students into the working world of these countries can, in turn, boost their economies. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 23-24).

These efforts are, unfortunately, not always successful. Despite the best efforts of many countries worldwide to import their fair share of talented and skilled students from abroad, students as consumers are becoming more knowledgeable about their options with the help of globalization, communication channels and new technologies. Comparisons of higher education institutions both on a domestic and international level are on the rise amongst the newest generations of students, as well

as the act of analysing several elements of student life in various countries to see if integration after graduation would prove to be easy or a heavy challenge for them. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 24-25).

If an international student feels they are or will be discriminated against, or if they feel a lack of support is available to them from their host country during their studies, they are less likely to stick around after completing their studies, putting the countries that are purposely investing in their immigration at a clear loss. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 24-25).

In fact, a study that was recently carried out in the Netherlands stated that there were three crucial themes to keeping international students in the country of their studies after graduation: A good preparation for the Dutch working life after studies, a good integration into the Dutch language, culture and social life, and good facilities for the wellbeing of the students, especially in the form of accommodation. It is with these trends that we really start to see the need for consideration of student satisfaction to improve the effect of student mobility on the economy of the host country. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 26; Social and Economic Council, 2016).

Another thing that affects the economics involved in student mobility is the inequalities that occur within international higher education. For example, limitations can often be set by the higher education institutions of a destination for student mobility, especially in terms of how many students are accepted into a study program and from what background these students come from.

Students who meet the most desired criteria of these higher education institutions are usually financially stable, and have already had the benefit of a high quality education prior to submitting their applications to study abroad. This limitation means that the fast growth of the higher education economy of a destination for mobile students does not exactly promise the outcome of a largely diverse classroom, working counter-clockwise against the movement of economic progression towards more international classrooms, and thus, the destinations' international workforce. (Streitwieser 2012; Streitwieser 2014, p.74-76).

Implementations have been made by governments worldwide to help make it possible for students who come from less privileged backgrounds (both nationally and internationally) to still be able to take part in higher education.

As an example, in 2003 the government of Brazil directed nearly 45% of its' higher education institutions towards adopting affirmative-action measures. This was done in order to help under privileged students take part in higher education. Within 6 years, the race inequality of students was broken when those who enrolled into a Brazilian higher education institution of a race other than white (previously the vast majority) increased by 100%. By 2009, the population of the student body that was not white made up for about 35%. Similar actions directly related to student mobility in other destinations have also successfully balanced the scale and made it more possible for students of all backgrounds to take part in student mobility. (Streitwieser 2014, p.74-76; Rosemburg, 2012).

Although student mobility has increased greatly over the years, there is still a clear indication of inequality in participation. Student mobility still shows a steady flow of students migrating from poorer countries to richer countries to take part in higher education, especially since nearly two thirds of all foreign students studying in OECD countries come from non-OECD countries. (Streitwieser 2012; Streitwieser 2014, p.74-76; OECD 2012).

The costs of studying at an international higher education institution for under privileged students can be quite high when one considers the economical differences between the non-OECD countries where these students primarily come from and the OECD countries where they wish to carry out their studies. In study destinations such as the United States, a popular choice for mobile students as mentioned in capter 2.1.1, the tuition prices are currently on the rise, and many of their foreign students still have to depend on funding from back home despite the broad amount of scholorships available to them from the United States. (Streitwieser 2012; Streitwieser 2014, p.74-76; OECD 2012).

As global trends continue to favour the need for student mobility both on behalf of the student and on behalf of the destination, more innovations and policies are needed to bridge under privileged students with study abroad opportunities in order for the economics of student mobility to become more equal.

2.3 Factors Playing a Key Role in Student Mobility

There are typically two types of student mobility; student mobility for a full degree program and student mobility for credits, also known as an exchange period. Student mobility for a full degree program takes place when a student leaves their home country to study a degree in its' entirety abroad, whereas student mobility for credits takes pace when a student leaves their home country to study degree-related courses for a period of time (usually a semester or two) in a foreign country. (Streitwieser 2014, p.88).

Student mobility from both types relies heavily on certain circumstances that international students face both personally, as well as on certain circumstances that higher education institutions face politically and economically when seeking international applications.

Factors such as the variations of types of international students, the language in which their studies are carried out at their higher education institutions, the availability and affordability of specialized fields of studies, and the choice between attending highly ranked and reputable higher education institutions or more affordable institutions are key elements in whetheror not a student chooses to study abroad.

2.3.1 The variation of International Students

One thing to note, that is possibly the most important element of student mobility, is that no international student is exactly the same as another, as all international students have their own personal backgrounds, wants, needs and ambitions. One simply cannot look at the international student target market as a whole and expect to cater to it altogether. One particular study from World Education Services (*Not All International Students Are the Same: Understanding Segments, Mapping Behaviour*) took a look at international students who were inbound to the United States, and then divided them into four groups: the *Strivers*, the *Strugglers*, the *Explorers* and the *Highfliers*. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The *Strivers*, who made up for 30% of the overall international student group inbound into the United States, were majorly employed (63% of them) at the time of their application for a higher education institution education. They were the most likely of all the groups to want more information about financial aid opportunities, probably because they generally come from a background with a need to provide for themselves. Their financial shortcomings did not stop them from their academic dreams though, as 67% of them had plans to get into a top-tier school. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The *Strugglers*, who made up for 21% of the overall international student group inbound into the United States, were in need of further assistance to help them prepare for the challenges of the classrooms in the United States. They also came from financially challenged backgrounds, and were generally less picky about where they would carry out their higher education than the other groups. In fact, only 33% of them were actually interested in the ranking and reputation of the school they where looking to apply to. The application process may also have been a struggle for this group, as they were the most likely group to use the help of an agent or other similar services to assist them with the preparation of the required documentation of the application process. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The *Explorers*, who made up for 25% of the overall international student group inbound into the United States, were possibly more interested in the idea of studying abroad itself, than the actual academic elements of the studies. They were also the most interested in the personal aspects and the experiences that come with student life more so than the actual studies. A decent 19% of this group said that they would rather have more information on the student services offered by the higher education institution that they were applying for than anything else. This group was also the most likely to attend a second-tier higher education institution and use education agent services moreso than the other groups. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The *Highfliers*, who made up for 24% of the overall international student group inbound into the United States, were the most academically prepared students of all the groups, and were also the most likely to afford to attend studies at a more expensive higher education institution, even without the help of financial aid. This group in particular carried out their application efforts within the Unit-

ed States in particular because of its' history in higher education excellence. In fact, 46% of this group voiced that receiving information about the ranking and reputation of the higher education institution was the most important to them. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27; Choudaha et al, 2012).

Although there are not many similar studies to compare these demographics with, in the case of student mobility trends to Europe as a destination, or to other parts of the world one could assume that there is not too much of a difference from this study. Of the students choosing to study abroad in the United States, their wants and needs can be assessed in many variable ways. It is safe to assume from these statistics that the *Strivers* and the *Highfliers* of the world are the most likely groups to choose higher education institutions that are highly listed on academic rankings and are historically well known for their prestige, and the *Struglers* and the *Explorers* of the world are the most likely groups to choose higher education institutions that are second-teir or lower. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 28; Choudaha et al, 2012).

2.3.2 The Language of International Studies

Higher education institutions with study programs in major languages such as English, French, German, Chinese and Spanish are top destinations for international students who are interested in studying their degrees in a specific language, especially in order to address their specific wants and needs for their education. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 28; OECD 2011, p. 323).

As English is becoming a highly valued language in today's world, many higher education institutions worldwide are opting for more study programs to be held in the English language. This is done in hopes of attracting more international students, by answering the demand of having more study options offered in a language that is greatly understood by much of the worlds' inhabitants. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 28; OECD 2011, p. 323).

Offering studies in the English language in countries where English is not the mother tongue of the locals can be a challenging goal, as there are very clear boundaries between English as a language of teaching and the mother tongue of the higher education institutions' teachers in some countries. This creates a quality issue in terms of the studies offered to international students, as when a higher education institution advertises the internationality of their studies to international students, a diverse classroom made up of students of various nationalities is simply not enough to keep their students satisfied, especially if the capability of the teachers to teach in a language foreign to their own is lacking. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 28-29; De Wit, 2012a).

2.3.3 The Availability and Affordability of specialised Fields of Studies

On a country-based basis, the larger portion of student mobility is directed towards specialised and advanced research programs. This could correlate with the overall attractiveness of some of the advanced research programs that each country specialises in, as the students who enrol in these programs generally have high hopes of achieving a successful career in these specialised industries

post-graduation, especially if there is a chance to reamin and do so in the country of their studies. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 29; OECD 2012, p. 368).

In many countries, enrolment in the areas of social sciences, business, law, humanities and engineering can make up for a dominant trend amongst international students; A particular example being that the Netherlands attracts nearly half of its' international students (49.2%) into its' social sciences, economy, and law study programs. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 29; OECD 2012, p. 375).

These are quite impressive numbers, until one sees how the Netherlands actually compares to the three other Scandinavian countries Sweden, Finland and Denmark. In 2012, according to OECD statistics, Sweden attracted 34,5% of its' international students to study engineering, and 17.2% of its' international students to study sciences. Finland attracted 31.7% of its' international students to study engineering, and 11.2% of its' international students to study sciences. Denmark attracted 19.3% of its' international students to study engineering, and 10.3% of its international students to study sciences. The Netherlands fell behind these three countries, only attracting 3.9% of its' international students to study engineering, and 3.4% of its' international students to study sciences. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 29; OECD 2012, p. 375).

In analysing these statistics; even though the Netherlands hosts its' fair share of international students, the number of those students who chose to enrol into specialized advanced research programs, such as in engineering and sciences, lags behind a few other countries such as Sweden, Finland and Denmark. In this particular case, it is not so much a correlation that these fields were not as competitive with those of the same in other countries, however, it can be a direct correlation to the fact that there are more financial aid services available to students in Scandinavia, for those hopeing to peruse these specialized and advanced research programs within Europe as a whole. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 29; OECD 2012, p. 375).

2.3.4 The Cost Factors of Student Mobility

As mentioned earlier with the variation of international students, depending on their own personal wants and needs, as well as their means of managing the costs of their studies, academic rankings and reputation can be a serious factor in student mobility, especially among the *Strivers* and the *Highfliers*. These groups of students can afford to attend the best of the best, thus, they keep their eye on traditional academic rankings and the reputation of global higher education institutions when deciding where to study. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27- 30; Choudaha et al, 2012).

On the contrary, not many of those in the other groups of international students, such as the *Strugglers* and the *Explorers* have the means to get into first-tier higher education institutions, thus, the cost of studies can be a key factor in their mobility choices. These costs do not always end at tuition fees, but also, the costs of living they will face during their studies, especially when these groups of students cannot always work enough to support themselves during their studies. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27 - 30; Choudaha et al, 2012).

As more European universities will begin to introduce tuition fees on study programs that used to be low-cost or free of charge, and as the basic costs of living are already an issue for many of the students of not so stable backgrounds, alternatives including choosing local higher education institutions or local branches of international higher education institutions, as well as online studies can become the new rising trends in the higher education sector, possibly even posing as serious competition for higher education institutions who rely heavily on international student mobility for their success. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 28-30; Choudaha et al, 2012).

3 A THEORY OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH A FOCUS ON STUDENTS

As many higher education institutions charge tuition fees or gain other financial benefits from the enrolment of international students, a lot of the basics of customer satisfaction can be applied to the higher education industry. The customer satisfaction of students is a crucial element to ensure not only that the current students of a higher education instutition do not transfer to another higher education institution during their studies, but also to ensure that the alumni can help boost the number of new applicants based on the word of mouth marketing of their satisfaction, and their financial contributions.

This chapter breaks down the basic theory of customer satisfaction, how to measure it and how to apply these methods towards students as the customers of higher education institutions.

3.1 The Origins of Customer Satisfaction

The origins of the concept of customer satisfaction gets its' roots from the 1990's. Customer satisfaction was taken into account in hopes of providing a solution for the growing issue of companies being capable of competing with both national and global competitors. Companies began to make a greater effort in understanding the deeper elements of their customers in order to both improve customer relations in order to expand their businesses, as well as to maintain their current customer base in the long run. (Myers, 1999 p. 1).

Before the utilisation of customer satisfaction research and tools, marketing made up for the primary communication channel between a company and its' customers. The biggest goal of marketing was to attract new customers, which left a grey area in terms of how many customers buying their products were either a returning customer or a new customer. With the industrial age producing competitors on the rise, and globalisation just starting to make it's grand entrance, companies needed a way to ensure that their customers would stay loyal to them, and that required the extensive research of customer satisfaction. (Myers, 1999 p. 3-4).

At the time, companies found that it generally would cost them five times more to gain a new customer than it did to maintain their current relationship with an existing customer. The heavy emphasis that the marketing departments of these companies had on gaining new customers then allowed for a shortage of attention to be paid to returning customers, which then led to returning customers taking their business to a competitor company whenever they felt their personal needs were not being met according to their expectaions. (Myers, 1999 p. 2).

Another issue with the marketing tactics of many companies during this time was that the marketing team did not have the capability to track or monitor whether their customers were new or returning, thus they had the inability to know whether the customer was actually satisfied with the product they had purchased or not. (Myers, 1999 p. 3-4).

The new understanding of customer satisfaction, which came as a result of finding new ways to keep an edge on business competition, offered companies the solution for their otherwise incomplete efforts of marketing primarily for the purpose of gaining new customers. The concept that marketing could still be carried out in a way to gain new customers as well as to maintain the relationships with existing customers brought about the original customer satisfaction movement. This movement forever changed the way that most companies viewed their customers, moving onwards from quantitative marketing efforts to more qualitative marketing efforts, and also allowing for customization, which is now known to lead to the higher satisfaction of customers in todays experience-based economy. (Myers, 1999 p. 5).

3.2 Measuring Customer Satisfaction

The core tool in measuring customer satisfaction today is the structured questionnaire, which is a question and answer based form used to compile statistics on customer satisfaction directly from the customer source. This questionnaire is generally carried out periodically based on the needs of the company and their marketing and customer relations' strategy. One questionnaire research is simply not enough to measure the ever-changing trends of customer satisfaction in the long run, as both the products a company proudces and the needs of the customer will change periodically according to new trends and drivers. (Myers, 1999 p. 12).

In order to carry out a successful customer satisfaction research, a company needs to build their questionnaire strategically, which will require prior knowledge of the customers needs, a clear reason why the research is being carried out, what will be done with the results of the research and how the results will be analysed. The researcher will also need to know in advance the tools needed to measure the satisfaction of the customers, the type of scale that will be used to measure the satisfaction of customers and how to construct the customer satisfaction index. (Myers, 1999 p. 12).

3.2.1 The Simple Satisfaction Scale

One of the most common and widely used satisfaction scales (used primarily by the company Study Advisory as will be showcased in the following chapters) is the simple satisfaction scale. This scale allows a company to measure the satisfaction of their customers in a very direct way. For example, the simple satisfaction scale is used in a questionnaire with questions that ask a customer to describe their satisfaction with a product on a scale numerically, verbally or with a mixture of both. The scale translates ther customers' feelings into numbers, for example:

1 - Not satisfied at all
2 - Somewhat unsatisfied
3 - Indifferent
4 - Somewhat satisfied
5 - Satisfied

When a customer selects the number that represents their level of satisfaction, this number can then be compared with the other numbers given by the other participating customers in order to draw a conclusion based on the average satisfaction scores given. The answers given by the customers on the simple satisfaction scale are greatly based on the customers' own feelings, and are also based on their experiences and expectations. This is a very minimalistic research tool, but it can still give a company some high valued insight as to what the customer thinks about the company and its' product. (Myers, 1999 p. 18-19).

3.2.2 The Customer Satisfaction Index

Once the feedback from the questionnaire is compiled by the research team, they will then use this information to create a customer satisfaction index. The index can then be applied to customer satisfaction as a whole, or it can be divided into categories in order to better understand customer satisfaction according to certain indicators. As mentioned before, it is important to understand how the customer satisfaction index will be compiled before the questionnaire is compiled and sent to its' recipients in order to break down the resulting information in an efficient way. (Myers, 1999 p.16).

Some of the most important steps in creating a customer satisfaction index are to decide first on the attributes that are to be included in the index, then to decide on the weights that each of these attributes have to determine their role in the customers' satisfaction, developing an index model and lastly deciding on what to do with that index model once the results are in. (Myers, 1999 p.181-182).

The attributes that are to be included in the index go hand in hand with deciding on what to do with the index model once the results are in. Many companies opt to mix up the four steps of creating a customer satisfaction index in order for it to work best in their favour. For example, if a company wanted the outcome of their customer satisfaction research to be measured with a satisfaction index based on a specific attribute, then the attributes included in the questionnaire and the index will reflect the outcome that the company wishes to achieve. (Myers, 1999 p.181-182).

It is however important for a company to consider covering several different attributes at a time with each questionnaire, as some of the attributes can overlap and create a better understanding of a customers satisfaction, and pinpoint the source of the findings. Although it is a popular concept to keep the attributes simple and minimal, a more extensive research requires the customer feedback to be viewed from several angles in order to better understand the connections between several business-related elements, and when combined, how they affect the satisfaction of the customer. This feedback can always be scaled down later on to take a closer look at each attribute on an individual basis if needed. (Myers, 1999 p.181-182).

The weight of each attribute is a very important part of measuring the customer satisfaction index. Every single attribute needs to have its' own weight according to what is the most important or relevant part of the research. Choosing the correct weight for each attribute can be a complicated and

tricky process, and typically, the weights of attributes will change over time as the customer wants, needs and satisfaction indexes progressively change as well. It is up to each company to individually decide how they want to weigh their attributes to better understand the satisfaction of their customers with the customer satisfaction index. (Myers, 1999 p.181-183).

3.3 Improving the International Classroom based on Customer Satisfaction

Although the minority of students who have studied, currently study, or will study at a higher education institution will not necessarily be a ”returning customer” they still have the freedom to explore continuing their studies at another higher education institution if they wish, and they also have access to powerful tools, such as the Internet and social medias, to help them access and spread word of mouth feedback drieceted at potential new applicants. Keeping this in mind, it is quite important for higher education institutions to measure their students' satisfaction regularly to make sure that their students are generally satisfied with the many different attributes involved in carrying out their studies.

Primarily, higher education institutions carry out a questionnaire either annually or semi-annually to better understand student satisfaction. Their goal is usually to see which areas are performing well, and which areas have room for improvement in terms of existing and new study programs, campus facilities, and other attributes that directly affect the institutions' academic success rate. (Billups, 2008 p. 1; Bryant, 2006).

Secondarily, as mentioned before, unsatisfied students can either drop out of a higher education institution, transfer to another higher education institution or carry out their continuation of a degree program at another higher education institution, and it is in the schools best interest to see as many students to graduation as possible. (Billups, 2008 p. 1; Bryant, 2006).

Many higher education institutions that boast high satisfaction among students also boast a low drop out rate, a high graduation rate, and a group of alumni that is happy to donate to the higher education institution both financially and by word of mouth marketing. (Billups, 2008 p. 2; Miller,2003).

3.4 Factors Playing a Key Role in Student Satisfaction

There are many attributes that affect the trends and drivers of student mobility. These attributes can also give some insight as to what makes a student satisfied with their place of study.

The variations of the different types of international students:

As mentioned before in chapter 2 of this thesis, the *Strivers*, the *Strugglers*, the *Explorers* and the *Highfliers,* provides a good basis of understandting that students as customers will already have varied expectations of their place of study even before their studies begin, which is directly related to

their difference in background. It is then beneficial for a higher education institution to explore the backgrounds of their student target markets in order to provide the best possible learning environment for these varieties of students, and ultimately, ensure that these variations of students can all be satisfied during their studies. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27-28; Choudaha et al, 2012).

As an example, the *Strivers* may have a direct interest in the quality of their studies and the availibility of working-life practice during their studies to help them find stable employment opportunities after graduation. This is a good indicator that their satisfaction might lie with the teaching quality and the structure of their courses, as well as with the connections that the higher education institution has with companies for practical learning oppertunities. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27-28; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The *Strugglers* may have a direct interest in the affordability of the studies and the costs of living to carry out their studies, as well as the possibility to carry out their studies while working part time in order to financially support themselves until graduation. This is a good indicator that their satisfaction might lie with the student services offered by the higher education institution, and the value for money of the courses and facilities offered to them by the institution. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27-28; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The *Explorers* may have a direct interest in the internationality of the classroom, the variety of student exchange options, student parties and the possibility of student exursions. This is a good indicator that their satisfaction might lie with the internationality and student services offered by the higher education institution above all else. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27-28; Choudaha et al, 2012).

Lastly, the *Highfliers* may have a direct interest in the quality of the courses and instructors, as well as the overall academic performance of the higher education institution itself for more of an impact on their CV after graduation. This is a good indicator that their satisfaction might lie with the quality of the teaching, courses and campus of the higher education institution, as well as the reputation and the ranking of the institution amongst other places of study. (Streitwieser 2014, p. 27-28; Choudaha et al, 2012).

The Language and Quality of International Studies:

As was found in chapter 2 of this thesis, the language of which the studies are carried out is a key driver for student mobility, as in order for a student to carry out their studies in another country, they need to do so in the most beneficial language for their study and career goals. That said, the quality of these studies should not be compromised in order to obtain obtimal student satisfaction. (Streitwieser 2014; OECD 2011).

One obstacle that higher education institutions face with the carrying out of studies in a language foreign to that of the study destination is that they must provide adequate resources to facilitate their international classrooms, especially in the form of lecturers having a good proficiency in the

language they give their lectures in, and in the form of being able to provide their students with the international materials that they will need to support their studies, such as books published in various languages in the library or technological devices such as computers with access to interenet on campus. Lastly, the rate of internationality in the classroom itself also affects the student satisfaction with the language and quality of their international studies. Having an international classroom enriched with multipule nationalities gives the students access to language, cultural and psychological understandings that they simply cannot learn with lectures and books alone.(Streitwieser 2014; OECD 2011; De Wit, 2012a).

The Availability and Affordability of Specialized Courses and Fields of Study:

Found in chapter 2 of this thesis, the availability and affordability of specialized fields of study is another key driver in student mobility. When a student accepts their place of study at a higher education institution, they should certainly have access to all the tools and courses needed for them to become a professional of their study trade, and they should generally also have access to courses held outside of their study program in order to customize their studies to their career needs. (Streitwieser 2014; OECD 2012).

The variety of these courses that a higher education institution has to offer, and the cost of them can affect a students' overall satisfaction, as the students of today crave more variety to assist in the customization of their studies, as well as the chance to change their study program without having to seek it from another higher education institution. This also applies to the availability of continuation programs, such as studying in a masters degree program at the same institution where the bachelors degree program was carried out. (Streitwieser 2014; OECD 2012).

The Costs of living and Other Factors:

Lastly, as was found in chapter 2 of this thesis, the costs students face associated with the studies and the students' day-to-day life is another key driver in student mobility. Though this attribute is not limited to the enrolment process of the student nor is it always the core responsibility of the higher education institution, it may also directly affect the satisfaction of a student during their studies. Flexibility with working-life and study-life balance is a growing need for many international students, as students from all backgrounds are finding it easier to access and take part in student mobility. (Streitwieser 2014; Choudaha et al, 2012).

Student services such as student counceling; which helps the student manage their workload, gain access to the documentation needed for studying abroad, gain access to health insurance and other medical related practices during their studies, gain access to an overall supportive environment in a time of need are crucial for students who struggle a bit more than others, and will contribute to their overall success and satisfaction during their studies.

Other factors of student satisfaction can be measured according to the direct goals of the customer satisfaction research process of a higher education institution individually, but keeping a close customer relationship with the institutions' students will certainly help the institution to better understand what attributes hold the most value in their students satisfaction, and how to weigh those attributes accordingly as trends adjust over time.

4 AN INTRODUCTION TO ACADEMIC RANKINGS

The higher education industry has had access to academic rankings now for around 100 years, as academic rankings were originally designed to measure and rank universities according to their performance both academically and as a business. Once these universities are measured, they are then placed on a list in order of top performance downwards, according to which indicators are used to rank the universities. The use of academic rankings is popular among students, alumni, employers and even politicians. (Study Advisory, 2015j).

The indicators used in a ranking can vary from the quality of a university from a professional perspective, to the quality of a university from a student perspective. For a person to decide where to study based on an academic ranking, they should first understand the indicators used for each of the academic rankings they are considering in order to use them to their best advantage, and ultimately, to find the perfect place to study. (Study Advisory, 2015j).

There are several international rankings listing a select number of a very large number of higher education institutions worldwide. In this chapter, the goal is to better understand the methodology of four highly acclaimed international higher education rankings: The QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities, and CWTS Leiden Ranking.

These Rankings were selected because they are compared in theory with the research results of this thesis showcased in chapter 6 against the Study Advisory Popularity Rating showcased in chapter 5. These four rankings were also hand selected by Study Advisory to showcase on their online product and service for users to consider when deciding on a place to study.

4.1 QS World University Rankings

The QS World University Rankings is an international academic ranking of higher education institutions. Annually, 400 universities are listed in the ranking in five areas of faculties: arts and humanities, engineering and technology, life sciences and medicine, natural sciences, and social sciences and management. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

The QS World University Rankings are made up of six different indicators of academic performance of universities; *Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Student-To-Faculty Ratio, Citation Per Faculty, International Faculty Ratio* and *International Student Ratio*. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

The *Academic Reputation* area of the ranking makes up for 40% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring a global survey that asks academics to name the institutions that they believe the best work within their own field of expertise is coming from. The respondents cannot name their own institution, and weights to regions are also applied to prevent any discrepancies in the rate of responses. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

The *Employer Reputation* area of the ranking makes up for 10% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring a global survey that asks academic employers to name the institutions that they believe produce the best graduates, an indicator that is unique to all international university rankings. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

The *Student-To-Faculty Ratio area* of the ranking makes up for 20% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the number of academic staff to the number of enrolled students of an institution. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

The *Citations Per Faculty* area of the ranking makes up for 20% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the amount of citations, or rather, a research that has been cited by another research, the institution has produced over the last 5 years. Generally, the more the work has been cited, the more influential it is considered to be. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

The *International faculty Ratio* area of the ranking makes up for 5% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the number of international academic staff. Similarly, the *International Student Ratio* area of the ranking makes up for 5% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the number of international students. (QS TopUniversities, 1994-2015).

4.2 THE World University Ranking

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings (also known as THE World University Rankings) is one of the highest valued lists of the world's best performing universities. Working with consultations with some of the world's leading universities, THE World University Rankings strives to understand exactly what makes a university world class, and lists annually 800 top-ranked institutions accordingly. (THE World University Rankings, 2016).

THE World University Ranking has its' own methodology that compiles its' results in order to build the annual list of top universities published in THE World University Ranking. For the 2015-2016 rankings in particular, thirteen performance indicators were used to measure the success of a university, which are then distributed into five areas which make up for the total ranking score: *Teaching, Research, Citations, International Outlook,* and *Industry Income*. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

The *Teaching* area of the ranking makes up for 30% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the following factors: The reputation survey (15%) which examines the prestige of the institution, the staff-to student ratio (4.5%), the doctorate-to-bachelor's ratio (2.25%), the doctorates awarded to academic staff ratio (6%) which examines the attractiveness of the academic staffs' achievements to the incoming students, and the institutional income (2.25%) which measures the income to staff numbers and highlighting the purchasing-power. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

The *Research* area of the ranking makes up for 30% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the following factors: The reputation survey (18%) which examines the prestige of the institution, the research income (6%) which measures the research income to staff numbers and highlighting the purchasing-power, and the research productivity (6%) which takes into account the number of publications per scholar in the academic journals indexed by the Elsevier's Scopus database, which is then scaled down to the size of the institution and normalised according to subject. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

The *Citations* area of the ranking makes up for 30% of the overall score, and is compiled by taking into consideration the role of the university in spreading new ideas or knowledge. The number of times in which the published work of the university is cited globally by scholars plays a key role in this area of the ranking, with the hopes of measuring how much each institution is adding to the world of knowledge annually. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

The *International Outlook* area of the ranking makes up for 7.5% of the overall score, and is compiled by measuring the following factors: The international student to domestic student ratio (2.5%), the international staff to domestic staff ratio (2.5%), and the international collaboration (2.5%) which measures the amount of research journal publications that have one or more international author/s. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

The *Industry Income* area of the ranking makes up for the final 2.5% of the score, and is compiled by taking into account the innovations of the university, and the knowledge transfer according to the amount of research-based income earned by the university from a specific industry. The goal is to understand just how attractive the university is to receiving income from a commercial marketplace. This is then scaled against the number of academic staff that the university employs. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

These rankings, however, are exclusive to only a select amount of universities who are able to meet the standards of the ranking. Primarily, those who were able to teach undergraduates and produce an output of research with more than 200 articles per year during the timeframe of the years 2010 - 2014 were considered in the 2015-2016 ranking. Those who produced less than 200 articles per year during the timeframe of the years 2010 - 2014 were also considered, but only if they had a particular focus on specific fields, such as engineering or the arts. (THE World University Rankings, 2015).

4.3 Academic Ranking of World Universities

The Academic Ranking of World Universities (also known as ARWC) is developed by the work of researchers at the Center for World-Class Universities of Shanghai Jiao Tong University (also known as CWCU), which has been focused on the studies of world-class universities since the first publication of the ARWU in June of 2003. (ARWU Shanghai Ranking, 2015a; ARWU Shanghai Ranking, 2015b).

The ARWC is published annually and copyrighted by ShanghaiRanking Consultancy, a fully independent organisation who specialises in university information that is not legally subordinated to any of the universities or government agencies involved in the ranking. (ARWU Shanghai Ranking, 2015a).

The goal of the ARWC is to publish an annual global academic ranking list based on the following indicators, which are notable towards the success of a university: The number of alumni and staff who have won Nobel Prizes and Field Medals, the number of Thomson Teuters-seleced researchers that have been highly cited, the number of article publications in journals of Nature and Science, the number of indexed articles in the Science Citation Index - Expanded and Social Sciences Citation Index, and the overall per capita performance of the university. Of the roughly 1,200+ universities ranked annually by the ARWC, only the top 500 will be published in the ARWC list. (ARWU Shanghai Ranking, 2015b).

As higher education has diversified greatly since 2003, the ARWU developed in 2007 the ARWU by Broad Subject Fields (also known as ARWU-FIELD), listing the top 200 universities worldwide in five broad fields; Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Engineering/Technology and Computer Sciences, Life and Agriculture Sciences, Clinical Medicine and Pharmacy, and Social Sciences. (ARWU Shanghai Ranking, 2015b).

The ARWU has also developed in 2009 the ARWU by Subject Fields (also known as ARWU-SUBJECT), listing the top 200 universities worldwide in five subjects; Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Sciences and Economics/Business. (ARWU Shanghai Ranking, 2015b).

4.4 CWTS Leiden Ranking

The CWTS Leiden Ranking is a more scientific university ranking that includes 800+ major universities on its' list. The key element of this ranking is measuring the impact a university has had on science, and its' involvement in scientific collaboration. (CWTS Leiden Ranking, 2016a).

The CWTS Leiden Ranking can be used from three different angles; a list view, a map view and a chart view. These views can be adjusted according to specific indicators; the list being able to adjust according to one indicator at a time, and the chart allowing the user to compare two indicators at once on a scatter plot chart of universities. The map view allows the user to compare universities on an interactive map. (CWTS Leiden Ranking, 2016a).

When comparing the CWTS Leiden Ranking to other academic rankings, the advanced ability to compare university by scientific indicators allows the user to customize their search. The CWTS Leiden Ranking attempts to give a more logical perspective with its' methodology than simply relying on surveys or information given to them directly from universities. (CWTS Leiden Ranking, 2016a).

The CWTS Leiden Ranking is primarily based on the publications of the Thomson Teuters' Web of Science database. Citations are based on the Science Citation Index Expanded, the Social Sciences Citation Index, and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index from the period of 2011 - 2014. The main focus is to only include so-called core publications, or publications that were published in international scientific journals in the form of article and review type documents. (CWTS Leiden Ranking, 2016b).

In order for a publication to be classified as a core publication, it must fulfil the following criteria: It must be written in English, have one or more authors that are not anonymous, it must not have been retracted, and it must not have had appeared in a core journal before. The CWTS Leiden Ranking also specifies that in order for a journal to be classified as a core journal, it must fulfil the following criteria: It must have an international scope depending on the researchers involved and the location of its' publishing and citing's, and it must have a large number of references to other core journals. (CWTS Leiden Ranking, 2016b).

In specifics to scientific impact, the CWTS Leiden Ranking has the following indicators for its' users to explore: The *P (top 1%) and PP (top 1%)* indicator includes universities who belong in the top 1% of publications cited compared to others in the same field, the *P (top 10%) and PP (top 10%)* indicator includes universities who belong in the top 10% of publications cited compared to others in the same field, the *P (top 50%) and PP (top 50%)* indicator includes universities who belong in the top 50% of publications cited compared to others in the same field, the *TCS and MCS* indicator being the total and average number of publications that have been cited of a university, and the *TNCS and MNCS* indicator being the total and average number of publications that have been cited of a university that has been normalised according to their field and the year that they have been published. (CWTS Leiden Ranking, 2016b).

5 AN INTRODUCTION TO STUDY ADVISORY

Study Advisory is an online product and service directed at students and universities, providing a search engine for users to find a place to study from a database of about 12,000 higher education institutions. (Study Advisory, 2015a).

Each of these nearly 12,000 higher education institutions are provided a free basic profile, which they can then upgrade with yearly subscription packages in order to offer more content for users to see when they are browsing the university profile on Study Advisory, thus making the university profile a marketing tool for higher education institutions. (Study Advisory, 2015a).

One feature that makes Study Advisory different from any other similar online university search engines, portals and databases is the ability for current and past student users to rate their higher education institutions by leaving reviews on the university profiles. (Study Advisory, 2015a).

Study Advisory was developed by a team of professionals in Tampere, Finland who share a passion for higher education; especially international higher education, as several of the founders have a colourful history in studying abroad (Study Advisory, 2015b; Study Advisory, 2015g).

In fact, two of the founders gained their first experiences in the higher education service sector by starting up an exchange agency company in 2007, Asia Exchange, which has already helped thousands of students from over 200 universities achieve their goals of studying a semester or two abroad in Asia (Asia Exchange, 2016).

The Study Advisory team discovered with their own experiences that studying (domestic or abroad), is so much more than just the number of citations and publications, and the brand name of a higher education institution on a resume, rather, there are so many other elements in regards to a student's life and well being that should be considered when choosing a place to study. They then came together to develop their product, Study Advisory, and launched it in the autumn of 2015. (Study Advisory, 2015b).

5.1 Study Advisory Search Engine

First and foremost, Study Advisory was designed as a tool for users to find a place to study. The best way to create this tool was by developing a keyword-based search engine to customize the users search experience on a database of nearly 12,000 universities. This search engine is the first thing that users see when they enter the Study Advisory webpage. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

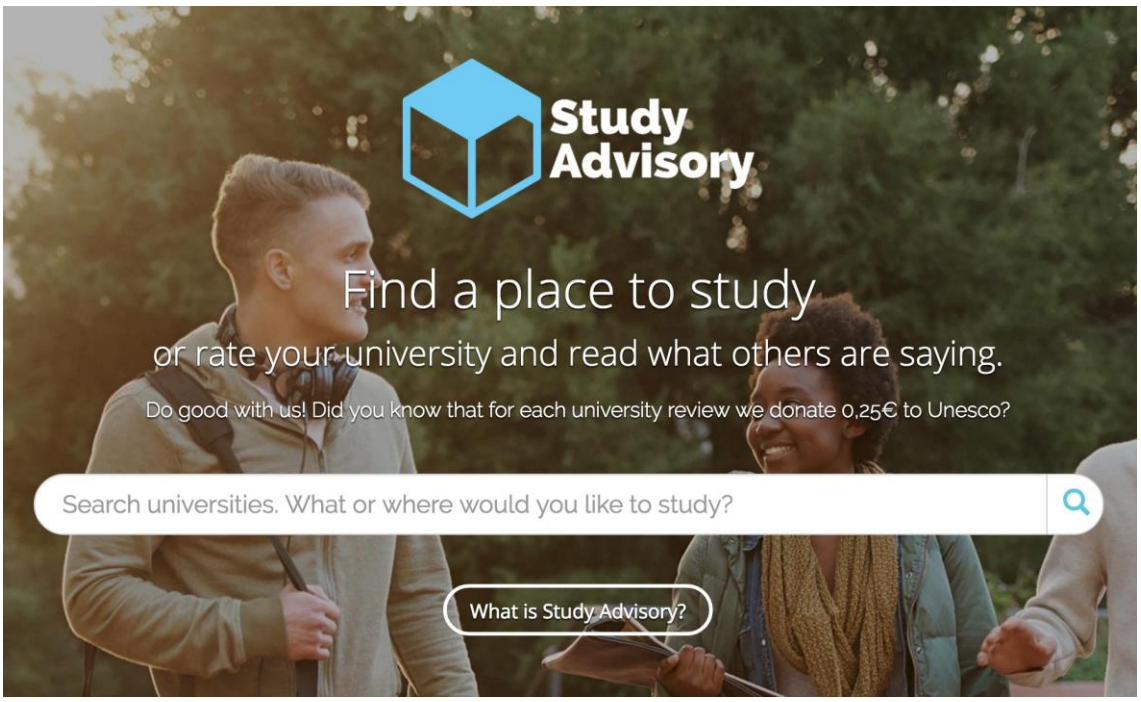

Image 1. The Study Advisory Search Engine (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The Study Advisory search engine works by typing in keywords relevant to the users' needs, such as a place to study (a specific city or country), a field of study (such as business, technology, law, art, or engineering), a degree level (bachelors, masters or doctorate), or the specific name of a higher education institution itself. A combination of more than one of these keywords is recommended for the best customization, such as the following example: "Bachelors in Engineering in Finland". (Study Advisory, 2015i).

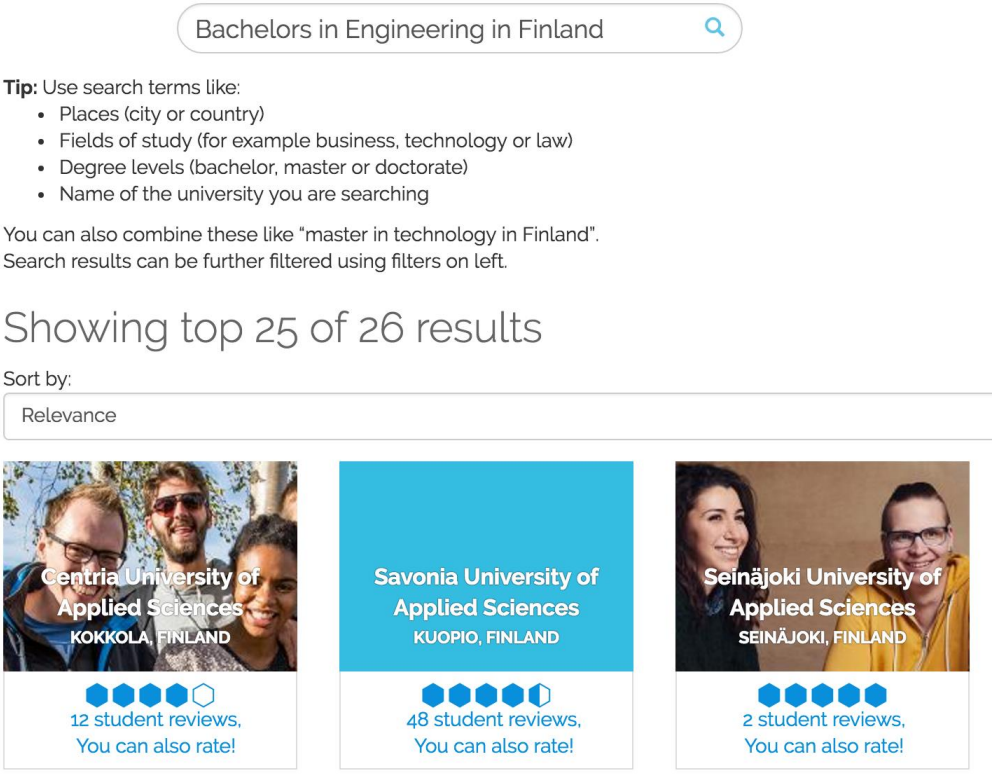

Image 2. Results of a keyword search in Study Advisory (Study Advisory, 2015i).

Once the keywords have been searched for, a list of universities with matching keywords will appear for users to browse, and they can then choose to select a university profile to explore, or add more filters from the left-hand side of the search results page (Study Advisory, 2015i).

5.1.1 Search Engine Filter Fields

The Study Advisory search engine allows for even more user customization by the implementation of filters. Users can choose to use these filters to find an even more perfect fit for their study needs. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

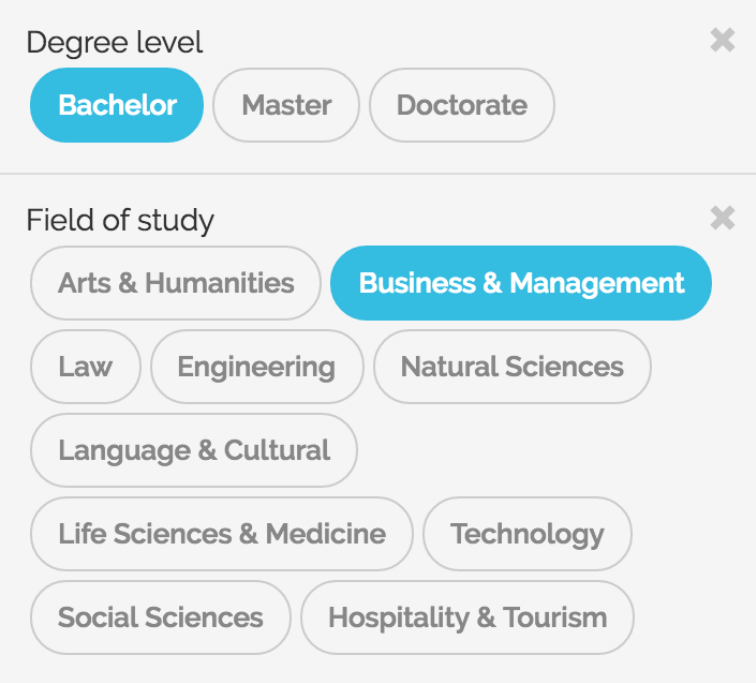

Image 3. Search Engine Filter Fields One and Two (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The first filter field is for the degree level, which allows users to filter their search results by higher education institutions that provide Bachelors, Maters and Doctorate degree programs. The user can select one or more of these filters for comparison. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The second filter field is for the field of study, which allows users to filter their search results by ten broad fields of study offered by higher education institutions; Arts & Humanities, Business & Management, Law, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Language & Cultural, Life Sciences & Medicine, Technology, Social Sciences and Hospitality & Tourism. The user can select one or more of these filters for comparison. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

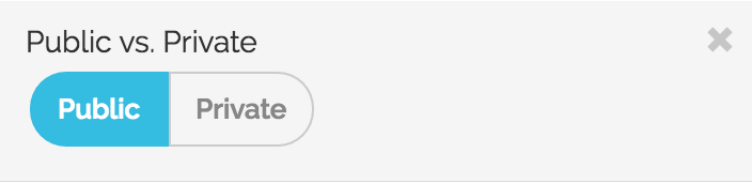

Image 4. Search Engine Filter Field Three (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The third filter field is for public vs. private studies, which allows users to filter their search results by higher education institutions that offer either private or public studies (Study Advisory, 2015i).

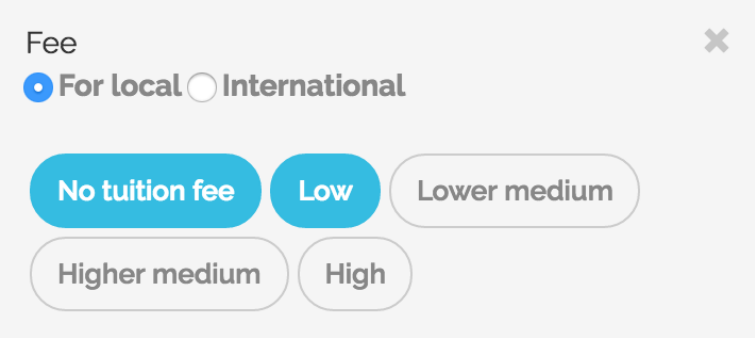

Image 5. Search Engine Filter Field Four (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The fourth filter field, fee, is to help users filter their searches by higher education institutions they can afford to study at. This consists of two main options; for local, which is the fee for studying domestically, and International, which is the fee for studying internationally. These two options can then be filtered by the following options: No tuition fee, low, lower medium, higher medium and high. The user can select one or more of these filters for comparison. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

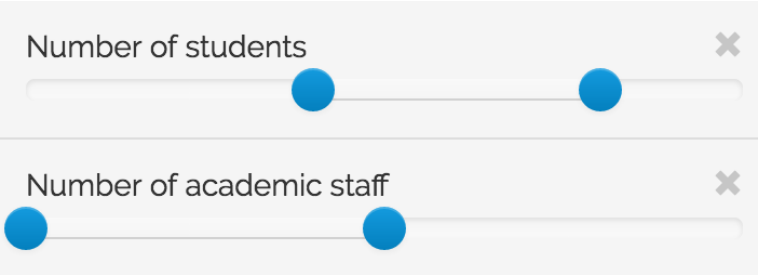

Image 6. Search Engine Filter Fields Five and Six (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The fifth filter field, number of students, allows users to filter their search results by the number of students currently enrolled in the higher education institutions provided in the search results (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The sixth filter field, number of staff, similarly to the fifth filter field allows users to filter their search results by the number of staff in the higher education institutions provided in the search results (Study Advisory, 2015i).

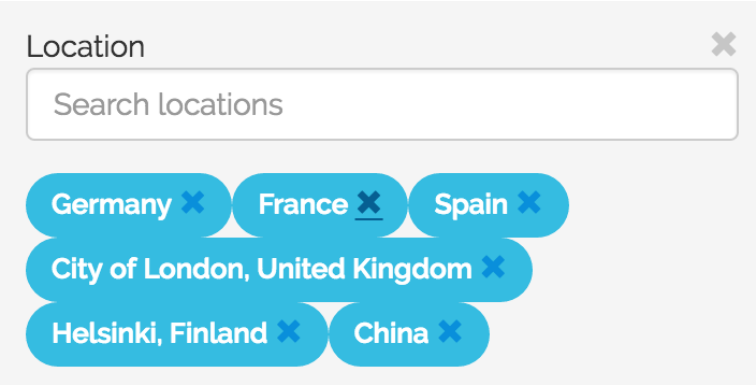

Image 7. Search Engine Filter Field Seven (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The seventh and final filter field is for location, which allows users to filter their search results by adding a keyword related to where they would like to study, such as a city or a country. The user can search for several filters for comparison. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

5.2 Study Advisory University Profiles

Each and every higher education institution in the world is allowed a free basic university profile on Study Advisory. There are currently around 12,000 university profiles on Study Advisory, compiled by open sourcing, from roughly 190 countries in the world and spanning 6 continents. (Study Advisory, 2015e).

Each listed university profile has some basic information about the university, which enables it to be found via the keyword powered search engine. This information is visible to all users, and gives the higher education institution a chance at gaining new applicants to their study programs free of charge. These university profiles are also open to student rating and reviews, another cost free feature for all parties involved. (Study Advisory, 2015e).

5.2.1 An Example of a Basic University Profile

The following is an example of a free basic university profile on Study Advisory, which appears to the user via the Study Advisory search Engine:

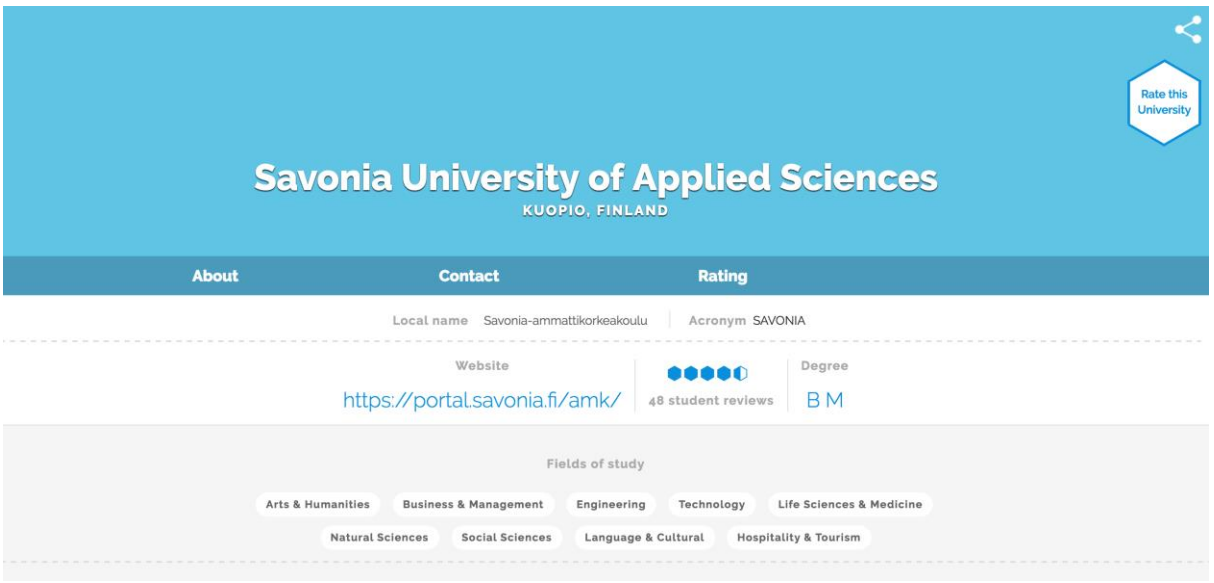

Image 8. An Example of a Basic Profile No. 1 (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The higher education institutions' name (local and international), webpage, Study Advisory Popularity rating, number of student reviews, degree program levels, and fields of study are shown at the top of the profile. There is a button on the upper right side of the profile for students to rate and review the university, and another for users to share the university profile on Facebook, Twitter or via email. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

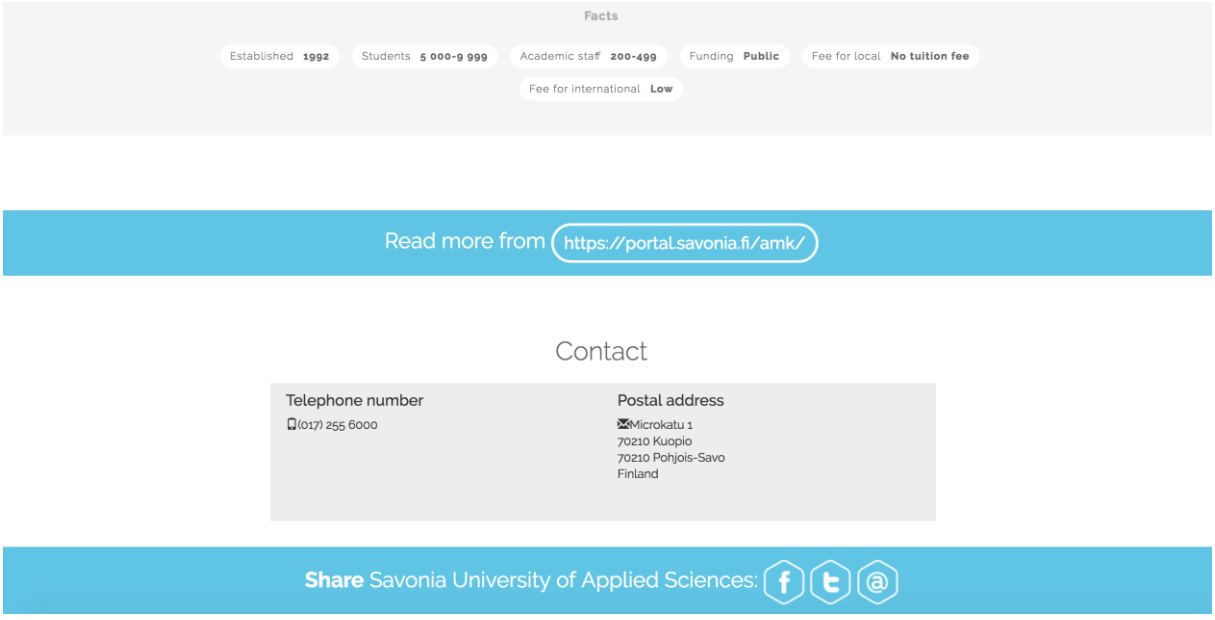

Image 9. An Example of a Basic Profile No. 2 (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The higher education institutions' facts on when it was established, how many students are currently enrolled, how many members of academic staff are employed at the institution, its' type of funding (public or private), and the fees for local and international students are shown at the middle of the profile. The link to the higher education institutions' webpage is also showcased again, as well as their contact information. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

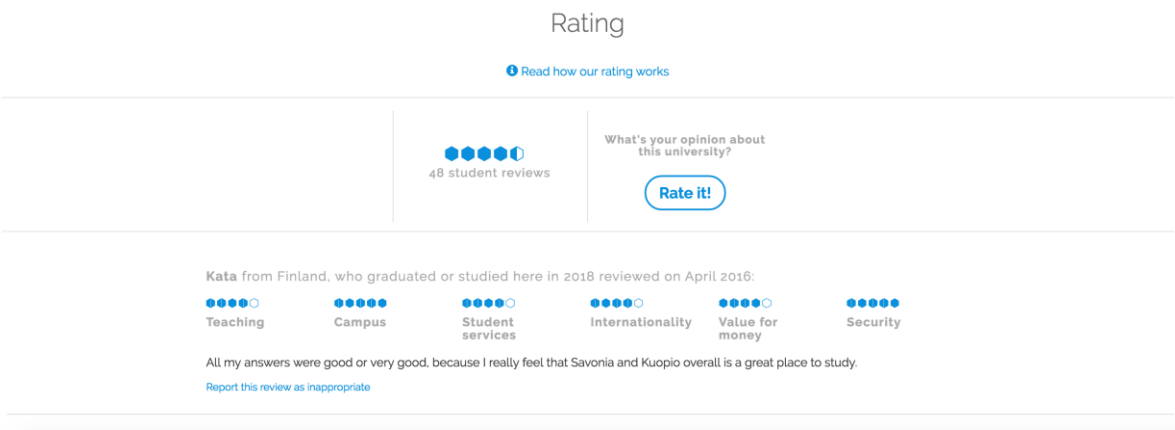

Image 10. An Example of a Basic Profile No. 3 (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The higher education institutions' Study Advisory Popularity rating, international university rankings (if at all listed in QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and CWTS Leiden Ranking), and student reviews are shown at the bottom of the profile. There is also another button for users to click to rate and review the university. (Study Advisory, 2015i).

5.2.2 University Profile Subscription Packages

If a higher education institution should want to add more content to their basic university profile on Study Advisory, there are a few subscription packages on offer by Study Advisory that will allow them to fully customize their profile to fit their marketing needs. (Study Advisory, 2015e).

Subscription packages also offer the higher education institution more visibility on the homepage under the "Featured Universities" section, a randomized selection of 8 university profiles that have an on-going subscription to a Study Advisory package. These packages are paid for annually with one stable price, varying only by region and currency. (Study Advisory, 2015e).

The Sliver package, which costs 500 Euros annually for European subscribers, includes the ability to add a logo to the university profile, as well as an XL cover photo to the university profile. The XL cover photo will then be added to the university profile icon, and the university profile will also be added to the "Featured Universities" section of the Study Advisory homepage. (Study Advisory, 2015f).

The Gold package, which costs 2500 Euros annually for European subscribers, includes all of the same features of the Silver package, plus the ability for the higher education institution to manage their own profile hands on. They have the ability to access and edit all the customization tools of the profile as often as they like, add study programs to their profiles with direct links to the admissions pages of these programs on their own webpage, add text content, links, photos and videos to their profile content section, add their own personal social media channels to the university profile, and access visitor reporting and analytics information on a monthly basis. (Study Advisory, 2015f).

The Platinum package, which costs 7500 Euros annually for European subscribers, includes all of the same features of the Silver and Gold packages with the exception that the Study Advisory team will create, customize and manage the entire university profile for the higher education institution. The Platinum package also features additional marketing via Study Advisory's own social media channels, the listing of student success stories, and multil-language profiling. (Study Advisory, 2015f).

5.2.3 An Example of a Gold Subscription University Profile

As it is currently the most purchased package by customers this far on the Study Advisory platform, here is an example of some of the features of a fully functional university profile with a Gold subscription package:

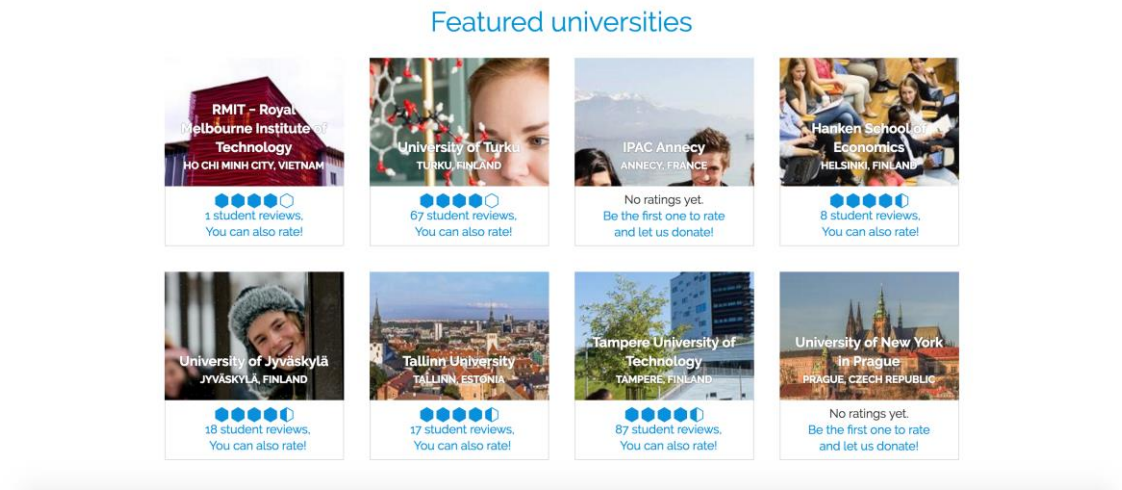

Image 11. University Profiles Featured on the Study Advisory Homepage (Study Advisory, 2015i).

All subscription packages come with the additional visibility of becoming a "Featured University" on the Study Advisory homepage (Study Advisory, 2015f).

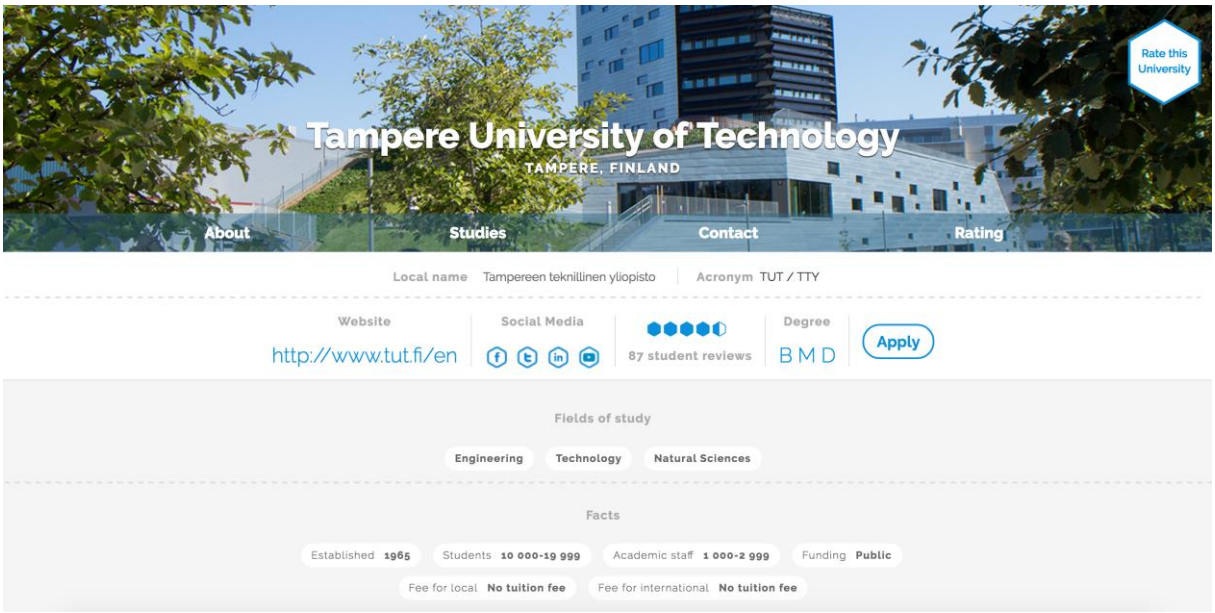

Image 12. An Example of a Gold Subscription University Profile No. 1 (Study Advisory, 2015i).

A cover photo has been applied to the university profile, as well as social media buttons leading the user directly to the social media accounts of the higher education institution, and an ”Apply” button has been added to direct interested users right to the application page of the higher education institution (Study Advisory, 2015f).

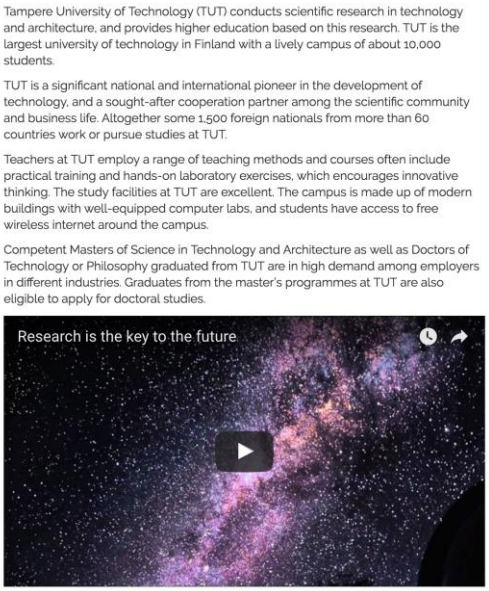

Image 13. An Example of a Gold Subscription University Profile No. 2 (Study Advisory, 2015i).

Content is added to the university profile in the form of text, videos and photos to make it more attractive to users, and to make the university profile a customizable marketing tool for higher education institutions (Study Advisory, 2015f).

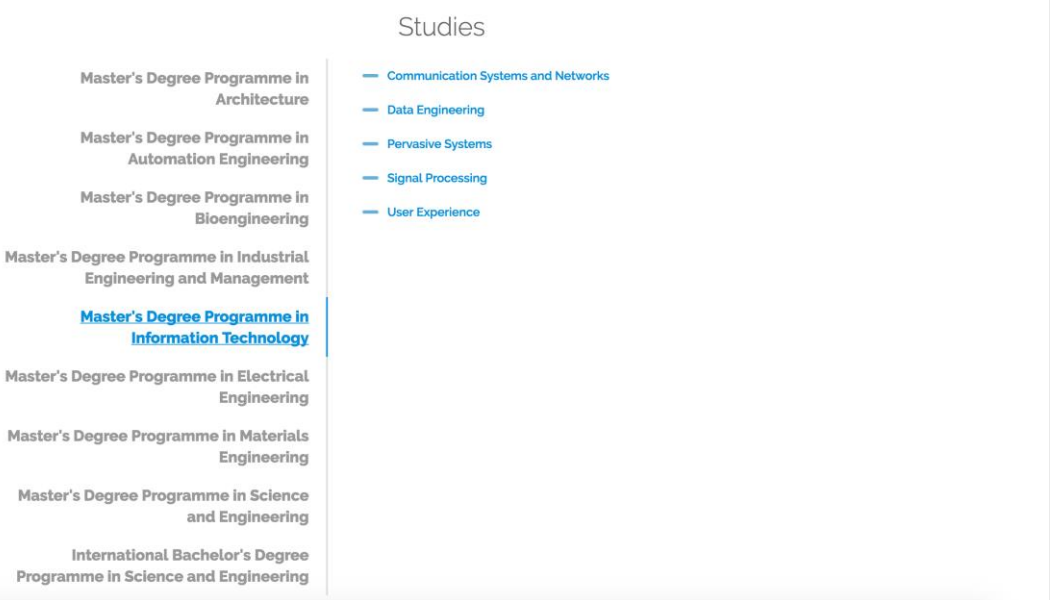

Image 14. An Example of a Gold Subscription University Profile No. 3 (Study Advisory, 2015i).

Study programs are added to the ”Studies” section of the university profile, making it easier for the user to navigate to the higher education institutions’ webpages and find out more about the study programs they have to offer (Study Advisory, 2015i).

5.3 Study Advisory Student Rating and Reviews

One of the most interesting features worth noting about the Study Advisory online product and service is the ability for students to rate their higher education institutions by leaving reviews on the university profiles of the higher education institutions where they have studied or are currently studying. (Study Advisory, 2015a).

5.3.1 Research Carried out With Students

Based on a research carried out by the Study Advisory team in June of 2015, with over 400 unique answers from students spanning 48 nationalities, they found that roughly nine out of ten respondents considered that their peers provide valuable information when it comes to finding and deciding on a place to study. (Study Advisory, 2015h).

They also found that nearly 70% of respondents voiced that the university website was the most valuable source for information other than their peers. Lastly, only 7% of respondents said that traditional university rankings are the most important factor to consider when searching for and deciding on a place to study. (Study Advisory, 2015h).

The research also yielded a very interesting graph, which gave insight as to what factors were the most important to the respondents when it comes to choosing a place to study (Study Advisory, 2015h):

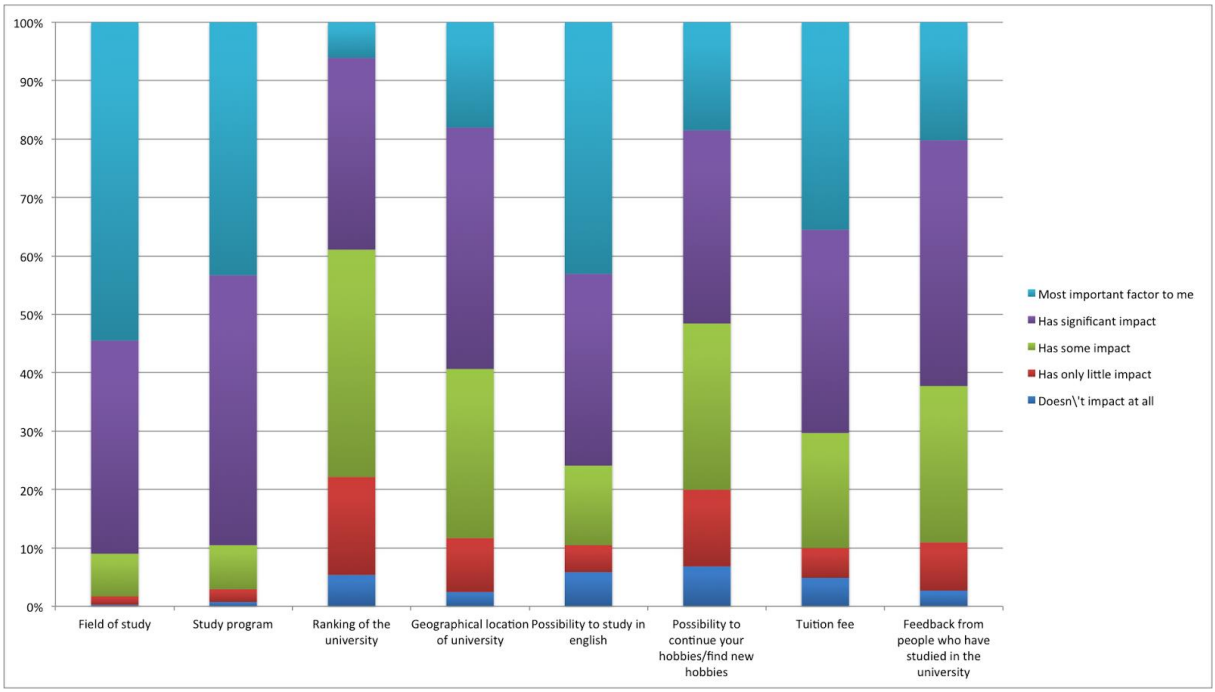

Figure 1. Factors important to respondents choosing a place to study (Study Advisory, 2015h).

5.3.2 Designed With Students in Mind

Using these statistics, the Study Advisory team crafted the Study Advisory Rating system, based on six main categories; *Teaching, Campus, Student Services, Internationality, Value for Money* and *Security* (Study Advisory, 2015d).

The *Teaching* category covers the quality of teaching, the diversity of the staff and the course content.

The *Campus* category covers the quality of the atmosphere at the higher education institution, its' facilities, location, and the activities held on the campus.

The *Student Services* category covers the quality of the student services offered by the higher education institution, and how helpful they were from the student's perspective.

The *Internationality* category covers the quality of the overall international atmosphere of the higher education institution, as well as the number of students from abroad and the number of international courses there are.

The *Value for Money* category covers the quality of the higher education institution overall compared to its' tuition costs and other costs of living.

The *Security* category covers the quality of the security both at the campus of the higher education institution and in the city where it is located.

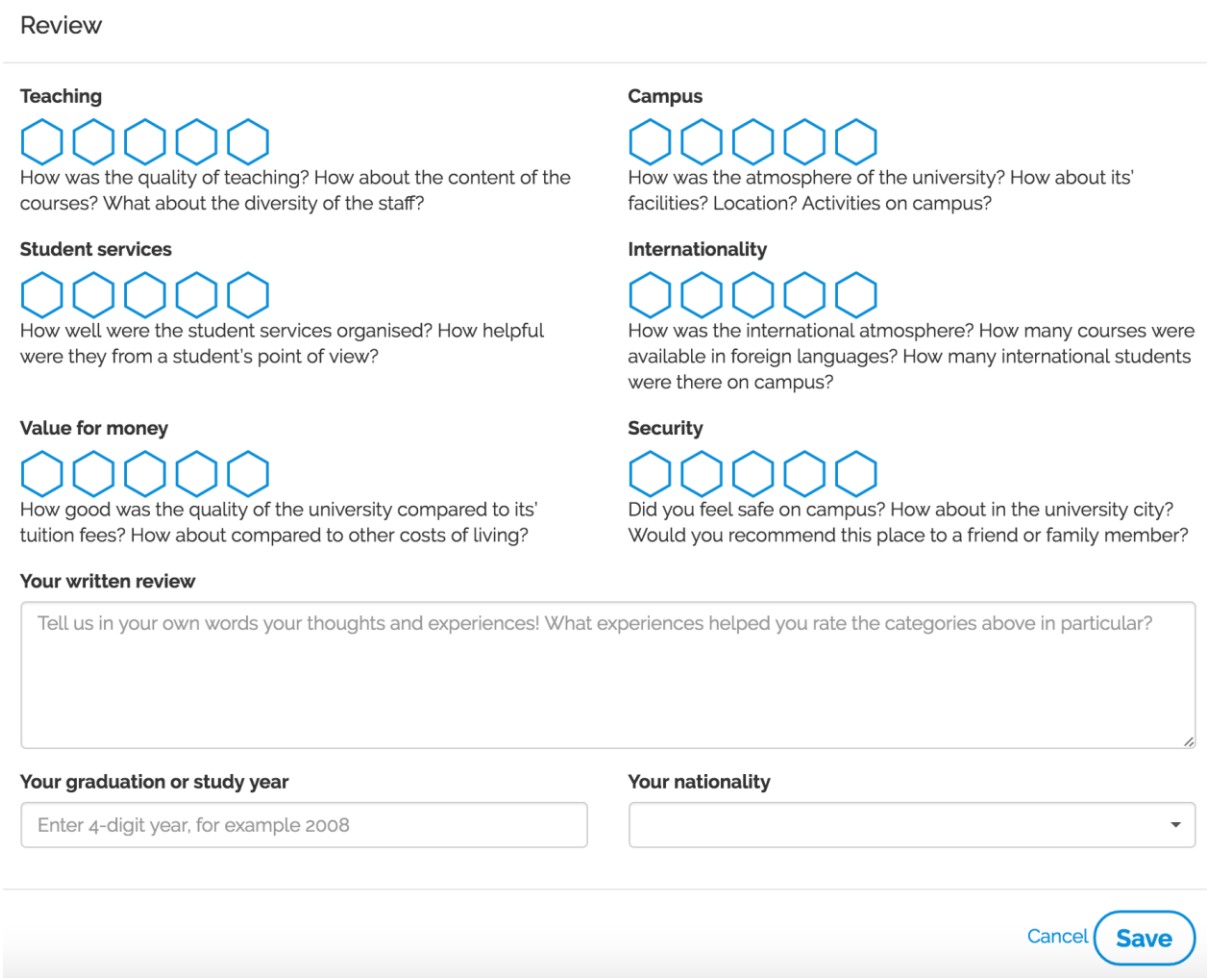

Image 15. Study Advisory rating form (Study Advisory, 2015i).

The Study Advisory rating form, found on each individual university profile, asks each student to rate these six categories on a scale from one (low or bad) to five (high or good) ”stars” (including the option for choosing half ”stars”), and it also allows the students the option to leave an open-ended answer (also known as a written review) for justification of their rating, or simply to leave other comments or advice for users to consider in relation to the higher education institution being rated. (Study Advisory, 2015d).

The student is then asked to provide the year of their graduation (or year of exchange studies, or estimated graduation year) as well as their nationality to add extra value and credibility for users to consider when checking the ratings and reviews on a university profile. (Study Advisory, 2015d).

5.4 Study Advisory Popularity Rating

The Study Advisory Popularity rating is Study Advisory’s own unique way of ranking the universities listed on Study advisory majorly by the feedback of the student ratings. It is made up of three elements; the number of visitors on a university profile in a month, the number of shares of a university profile on social media or via email, and the average number of ratings given by students. (Study Advisory, 2015c).

After the average is calculated by the sum of the three elements, the university profiles on Study Advisory can then be listed according to their Study Advisory Popularity rating, giving higher education institutions more visibility when users search for a place to study. (Study Advisory, 2015c).

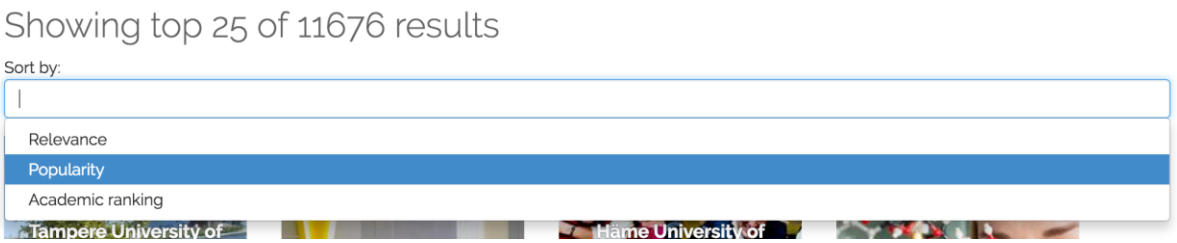

Image 16. How to sort university profiles by Study Advisory Popularity (Study Advisory, 2015i).

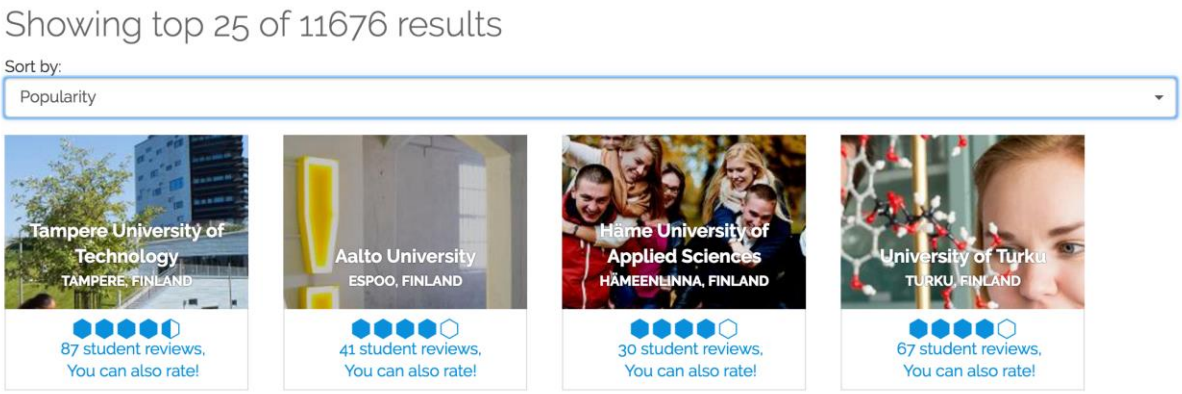

Image 17. University profiles sorted by Study Advisory Popularity (Study Advisory, 2015i).

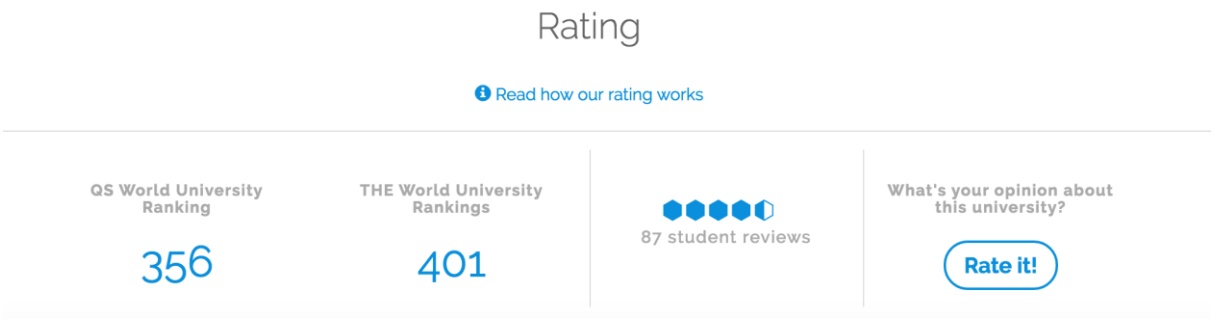

Image 18. The Study Advisory Popularity rating of a university profile (Study Advisory, 2015i).

5.4.1 Study Advisory Popularity Rating Methodology

The makeup of the Study Advisory Population Rating is as follows: The number of visitors to a university profile during a months time makes up for 40% of the rating.

The number of shares the university profile link gets on a social media platform, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as the number of shares the university profile link gets via email makes up for 20% of the rating.

The average student rating score of the university profile multiplied by the number of student ratings in total makes up for 40% of the rating. (Study Advisory, 2015c).

The overall Study Advisory Popularity rating of a university profile is then created by the weighted average of these three elements, and then the university profiles are sorted from most popular to least popular as a filter in the Study Advisory search engine. (Study Advisory, 2015c).

6 STUDY ADVISORY STUDENT SATISFACTION RESEARCH

For the support of this thesis and for the practical use of the company Study Advisory, a research was conducted with the aim of measuring the satisfaction of students who have studied or are currently studying at a higher education institution, and then compareing those results with the top lists of traditional academic rankings.

The core reasoning for this research was for the company Study Advisory to see if there is any corealtion between student satisfaction and traditional academic rankings. The research was carried out on a quantitative scale, following the example of the simple satisfaction scale introduced in chapter 3 of this thesis, a scale that allows a company to measure the satisfaction of its' customers in a simple and direct way (Myers, 1999 p.18-19).

The survey consisted of questions based on the same six indicators that are measured with the Study Advisory review form on the Study Advisory university profiles and the same open ended question students fill in to support their rating, as well as a direct question about whether or not the student was influenced to study at their higher education institution by traditional academic rankings.

The target market of this research was anyone who has studied or is currently studying at a higher education institution worldwide. The participants had access to the survey by following a link to the online survey tool Jotform, which was provided to them in an email or which they found from the posts published to the social media platforms of Study Advisory.

6.1 Research Background, Goal and Process

The background of the research was to measure and better understand student satisfaction, and to discover if there were any connections between the satisfaction of students and the rankings of their higher education institutions on QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and CWTS Leiden Ranking.

The research was carried out with a survey, which was developed in Jotform and was distributed to students majorly by email both directly and indirectly with the help of university staff and student organisations who were also contacted by email on the 13th of April 2016. A reminder email was sent on the 20th of April 2016.

The entire distribution process was carried out on the mass mailing platform Sendy by using the personal database of email addresses compiled by the company Study Advisory and their sister company Asia Exchange, distributing the survey link by email to roughly 17,000 students, higher education institution professionals and student organisation contacts.

The survey link was also shared on the Facebook and Twitter accounts of Study Advisory. Because of how the link to the survey was distributed, it is difficult to conclude the overall reach of the sur-

vey, or the response rate and success rate of the survey, but the Jotform platform reported that the survey form and been viewed 5308 times and 2049 usable answers were collected.

All of the questions in the survey were hand selected by the management team of Study Advisory and were then distributed to the author of this thesis to carry out the survey with. The questions were developed to match that of the online review form that student's use on the Study Advisory platform to review their higher education institution. An extra question not found on the online review form was added to measure how many of the student respondents had used traditional rankings to choose their place of study. A copy of the survey can be found at the first appendix of this thesis after the references. (Appendix 1).

The email and social media posts which contained the survey link asked the students for the name of the higher education institution where they have studied at least one semester or more, and to answer the question *"Did any traditional rankings of this university influence your decision to study at this university?".* The students were allowed to answer the survey more than once if they have studied at more than one higher education institution for at least one semester or more.

The survey then asked the student to rate their higher education institutions according to six categories: Teaching, Campus, Student Services, Internationality, Value for Money and Security to consistently match the same categories provided on the review form on the university profiles of the Study Advisory platform. The rating range was: Very Bad, Bad, Ok, Good, and Very Good.

The students were then asked to leave a written response explaining their reasoning for rating those six categories the way they did. All of the student responses were then uploaded to the Study Advisory platform in the form of student reviews.

6.2 Research Results and Analysis

There were a total of 2049 usable responses to the survey after the removal of duplicate submissions. The survey form was viewed a total of 5038 times as reported by Jotform analytics. The survey respondents were students both international and national ranging from 77 unique nationalities.

A total of 231 higher education institutions were named, rated and reviewed by the respondents of the survey. These higher education institutions represented 54 unique countries.

When asked: *"Did any traditional rankings of this university influence your decision to study at this university?"* 77% of the survey respondents answered "No".

When asked to rate their higher education institutions according to six categories: Teaching, Campus, Student Services, Internationality, Value for Money and Security, the survey respondents used the following rating range to answer: Very Bad, Bad, Ok, Good, or Very Good.

After compiling the results, these Satisfaction ratings were then translated as follows:

- Very Bad = 1
- Bad = 2
- Ok = 3
- Good = 4
- Very Good = 5

The satisfaction ratings of each of the six categories per higher education institution were then examined as follows: The sum of the ratings given by each student who reviewed the higher education institution was defined for each category, and was then divided by the number of individual rating respondents per school.

The total sum of the six averaged category ratings per school then made up for a ”Satisfaction Index” of each school, helping to determine how many of the schools were rated on average Very Bad, Bad, Ok, Good, or Very Good.

As the lowest possible score was 6,00 and the highest possible score was 30,00 for each higher education institution, one can assume that the values of the ”Satisfaction Index” are as follows:

- Very Bad = 6,00 - 8,99
- Bad = 9,00 14,99
- Ok = 15,00 - 20,99
- Good = 21, 00 - 26,99
- Very Good = 27,00 - 30,00

Example:

Respondent	Teaching	Campus	Student Services	Internationality	Value for Money	Security
School #1 Student A	3	4	5	4	3	5
School #1 Student B	3	4	3	5	5	4
School #1 Student C	3	5	5	5	5	5
Total Sum:	9	13	13	14	13	14
Average:	3	3	4,33	4,67	4,33	4,67

The sum of the averages from each category is 24,00, so the ”Satisfaction Index” is 24,00. Students rated their satisfaction on average of this school ”Good”.

All of the higher education institutions were then listed by their ”Satisfaction Index” in order from the highest ”Satisfaction Index” to the lowest ”Satisfaction Index”. The outcome was as follows:

Rated Very Good: 19% (44 out of 231)
Rated Good: 67% (155 out of 231)
Rated Ok: 13% (30 out of 231)
Rated Bad: 1% (2 out of 231)
Rated Very Bad: 0% (0 out of 231)

The very high majority of higher education institutions, an overwhelming 86% (199 out of 231), were rated 21,00 to 30,00 on the ”Satisfaction Index”, or ”Good” to ”Very Good” by the student respondents, whereas only 1% (2 out of 231) of the higher education institutions was rated 14,99 - 6,00 on the ”Satisfaction Index”, or ”Bad” to ”Very Bad”.

One could assume by these statistics that the student respondents were typically quite satisfied with their higher education institution.

The ”Satisfaction Ranking” of each school was then compared to the following traditional academic rankings: QS World University Rankings, THE World University Ranking, Academic Ranking of World Universities and CWTS Leiden Ranking.

Only 28,6% (66 out of 231) of the total 231 higher education institutions was listed on any of the top rankings lists of these four leading academic ranking platforms.

42 higher education institutions made it to the top 400 of the QS World University Rankings list, 22 institutions made it to the top 200 of the THE World University Ranking list, 9 institutions made it to the top 100 of the Academic Ranking of World Universities list, 63 institutions made it to the top 750 of the CWTS Leiden Ranking list.

One could conclude from these statistics that even though the majority (165 out of 231 or 71,4%) of these higher education institutions named by student respondents in the research are not listed in any of these four leading academic ranking platforms, the majority of these higher education institutions (199 out of 231 or 86%) were still rated 21,00 to 30,00 on the ”Satisfaction Index”, or rather ”Good” to ”Very Good”.

Taking a deeper look at the 199 higher education institutions that were rated 21,00 to 30,00 on the ”Satisfaction Index”, or ”Good” to ”Very Good” only 31% (62 out of 199) of them were listed on any of the top rankings of the four leading academic ranking platforms, meaning that 69% (137 out of 199) of the higher education institutions were still considered ”Good” or ”Very Good” by the student

respondents even though they were not listed on any of the top rankings of the four leading academic ranking platforms.

This further confirms that although most (137 out of 199 or 69%) of the higher education institutions named by student respondents in the research are not listed in any of these four leading academic ranking platforms, they were still rated 21,00 to 30,00 on the "Satisfaction Index", or "Good" to "Very Good" by the student respondents.

One could then conclude from these statistics that the student respondents were typically satisfied with their higher education institutions even though many of them were not listed in any of these four leading academic ranking platforms.

One could also then conclude from these statistics that there is no clear correlation between student satisfaction and traditional academic rankings, as students can still be quite satisfied with higher education institutions that do not make the top traditional academic ranking lists.

7 CONCLUSIONS

To finalise this thesis and its' research, this chapter will showcase the understanding of the topic by the author, begining with an analysis of the research findings, followed by an analysis of the value of this thesis for the company Study Advisory of which the research was carried out, and ending with the final thoughts of the author based on her own personal assesment of the project.

7.1 Student Satisfaction and Academic Rankings: Is there a Link?

According to the research carried out in chapter 5, the author concludes there is not a clear link between student satisfaction and traditional academic rankings.

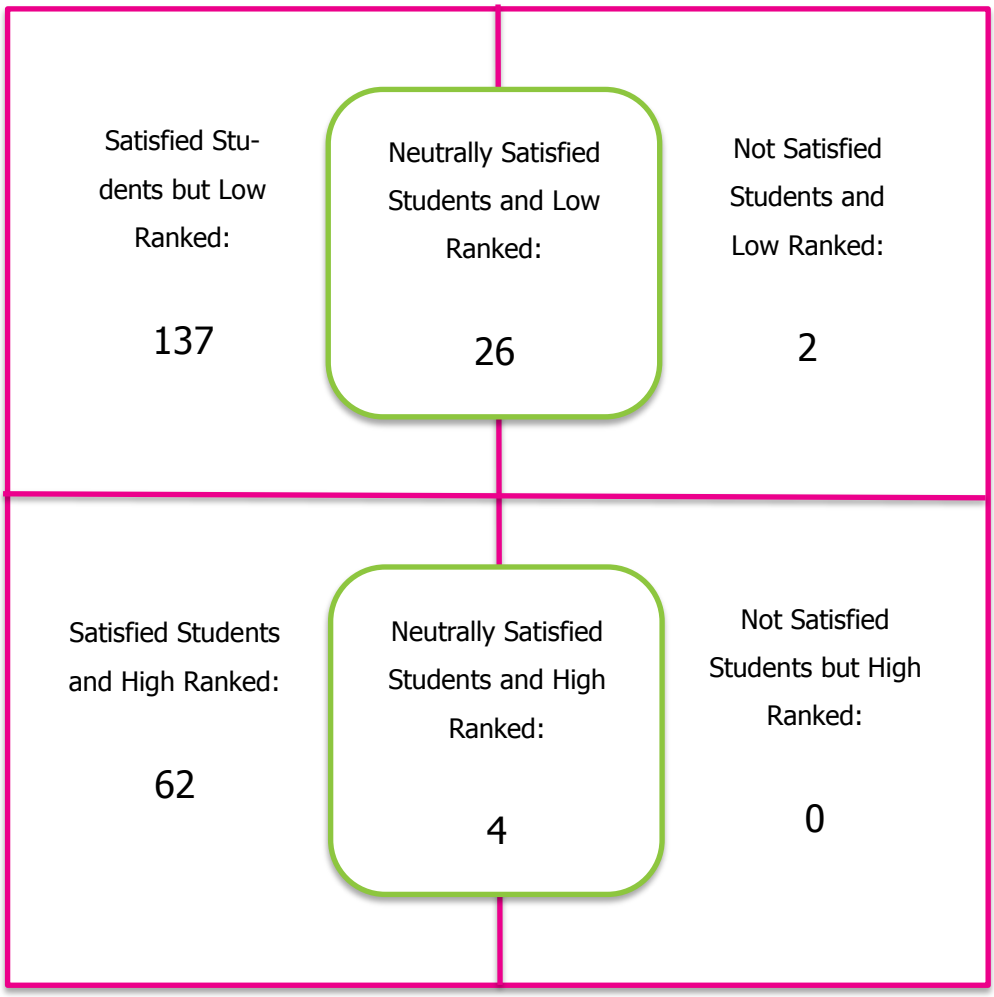

Figure 2. Student Satisfaction Vs. Ranking.

A highly ranked higher education institution does not necessarily promise to satisfy a student based on the research. In fact, the research suggested that there were more higher education institutions rated high in satisfaction but listed low in rankings than there were higher education institutions rated high in satisfaction and listed high in rankings.

The research was variable in many ways; not all higher education institutions globally were rated in the survey, and not all higher education institutions were rated by all of their enrolled students and

graduates. It is difficult to scientifically scale the rate of student satisfaction to traditional academic rankings as well because they are measured in very different ways and use different weighted indicators.

As mentioned before in the introduction to the four traditional academic rankings and their methodology, these rankings put a large focus on the amount of publications and citations linked to a higher education institution, and typically rank higher education institutions by their performance more so than the satisfaction of their students.

Students, on the other hand, have various needs when it comes to choosing a place to study abroad as was discovered in the chapter on student mobility and satisfaction. In fact, very little of the world's population of students can make it to the higher education institutions listed highly on traditional academic rankings since they make up a small minority of the worlds higher education institutions.

For example, Study Advisory has around about 12,000 higher education institutions listed in their database. The top lists of the four traditional academic rankings benchmarked in this thesis are as follows: 400 in the QS World University Rankings list, 200 in the THE World University Ranking list, 100 in the Academic Ranking of World Universities list, 750 in the CWTS Leiden Ranking list.

A rough estimate of the amount of higher education institutions that meet those criteria in Study Advisory is as follows:

QS World University Rankings top list: 400 out of 12000 or 3%
THE World University Ranking top list: 200 out of 12000 or 2%
Academic Ranking of World Universities top list: 100 out of 12000 or 1%
CWTS Leiden Ranking top list: 750 out of 12000 or 6%

With the most inclusive of these four traditional rankings only showcasing roughly 6% of the nearly 12,000 higher education institutions listed in the Study Advisory database, the competition for potential students to get into these highly ranked higher education institutions is quite large.

Two of the four types of international students listed in the variations of international students subchapter, the *Strugglers* and the *Explorers* who made up for 46% of the case study, are typically not after getting accepted into high-ranked higher education institutions.

Many of the *Strivers*, who made up for 30% of the case study, who would like to attend a highly ranked higher education institution still face the barrier of high tuition costs, which sets them apart from the *Highfliers*, who made up for 25% of the case study and who are well equipped both financially and academically to be enrolled in a highly ranked higher education institution.

In situations where a large portion of international students need to opt for lower tier higher education institutions, an alterative to only using traditional academic rankings to find a place to study can then be found in the product and service Study Advisory, as it allows students to customize their search for an institution which can specifically meet their personal wants and needs.

7.2 Study Advisory as an Alternative to Academic Rankings

Study Advisory has a unique rating system to help potential students find a place to study. The nearly 12,000 higher education institutions listed in its' database can be ranked by the Study Advisory Popularity rating, giving potential students a new way to compare higher education institutions: By the satisfaction of current and former students.

The profiles of higher education institutions can also be listed in the Study Advisory database by where they stand on traditional academic rankings, and each of the university profiles on Study Advisory also list the traditional academic rankings for potential student to consider, if there are any to compare.

This provides an alternative to only using traditional academic rankings to find a place to study, because not only are the available options top ranked, but they are also rated according to the satisfaction rating of current and former students.

Traditional academic rankings still hold value as can be seen in the case study listed in the variations of international students subchapter, as 55% of the international students in the case study considered the ranking and prestige of the higher education institution to be quite important when considering where to study in the United States.

Similarly, the results of this thesis reseach concluded that 33% of the survey respondents were influenced by traditional academic rankings when deciding on a place to study.

Study Advisory offers both traditional academic rankings and student satisfaction ratings to compare higher education institutions in its' database, making it even easier for students to customize their search for a place to study regardless of if they are looking for a top ranked institution, or an institution with a high level of student satisfaction. This also evens the playing field for higher education institutions that provide studies that are highly rated by their students, but are not showcased in the top lists of traditional academic rankings.

The filters that can be used alongside the keyword powered search engine of Study Advisory makes it even more possible for potential students to customize their higher education institution search according to their own individual needs.

Also, the only extra visibility that university profile subscribers can pay for is the chance to be visible on the front page of Study Advisory and the occasional showcasing of the university profile on the

social media platforms owned by Study Advisory. This provides more fairness and credibility to the Study Advisory search engine than many other search engines, where visibility can be sold to the highest bidder.

In conclusion, it is not necessarily logical for Study Advisory to be compared to traditional higher education rankings, as that would be similar to comparing apples to oranges. Study Advisory does however offer a unique alternative to using traditional academic rankings alone to find a place to study, as it takes into account the satisfaction of students. Users can find a place to study according to their individual needs, including traditional academic rankings as one of the many filters for customization on the Study Advisory platform.

The statistics of the research conclude that highly ranked higher education institutions do not necessarily promise the satisfaction of the students who attend them, simply because the makeup of the student satisfaction methodology used by Study Advisory and the methodology of traditional academic rankings differ so much.

The fact that Study Advisory offers a competitive alternative to traditional academic rankings, yet also includes the results of tradition academic rankings in its' own product and service can conclude that the user market for Study Advisory is very large.

Not only does Study Advisory cater to the needs of users looking for a place to study by providing them a wealth of information on different elements, but Study Advisory also caters to the needs of tens of thousands of higher education institutions worldwide who do not receive any or enough visiblity from other sources, such as traditional academic rankings.

The author finally concludes that student satisfaction and traditional academic rankings do not correlate according to the current inability of traditional academic rankings to measure the satisfaction of students, and that Study Advisory is a competitive alternative to traditional academic rankings according to its' ability to measure the satisfaction of students and its' ability to provide a platform for users to find a place to study customized to their own personal wants and needs.

7.3 How this thesis will benift Study Advisory

The original purpose for this thesis and research was for Study Advisory to gain a better understanding of their area of operation, in terms of what elements are key drivers in the customer satisfaction of students, how their product compares to tradition academic rankings and how this information can be beneficial for their future marketing efforts.

During the compilation of this thesis, both Study Advisory and other outside parties published the results of this research in print magazines and online medias. The results of the research were also used as supportive information during sales efforts and the crowdfunding campaign of the company.

The reviews compiled from the 2049 survey respondents were published in the Study Advisory database on the appropriate university profiles, which enriches their product for it's original use: to provide credible student reviews and rating for users to consider when using Study Advisory to find a place to study.

This thesis provides Study Advisory with a general foundation for future research on the customer satisfaction of students, and will be a guideline for future thesis works and research projects.

7.4 Personal Conclusions by the Author

After many months of planning and implementing this thesis, I as the sole author feel that this journey as a whole has helped me to develop as a marketing professional in the international higher education industry.

This thesis was carried out after a 4 month internship at Study Advisory, which gave me the chance to understand the product and service from a deeper perspective, allowing me the ability to see its potential as an alternative to traditional academic rankings, and giving me the confidence to carry out this research.

This internship and thesis has deepened my knowledge of marketing, customer relations and sales, which are all crucial skills for my future career. After the completion of this thesis, I am confident that I have all the right tools to possibly continue my career in the higher education industry as a marketing professional.

As a self-assessment, comparing the results of my research and thesis to my thesis plan, I feel that I have carried out my duties well with the tools that were available to me. I feel that I now have a deeper understanding of the research itself and why it was necissary, especially because I notice now all the variables that could be built upon in the future for a more concrete research.

Looking back, I would have liked to have had a better understanding of this thesis topics' outcome beforhand in order to have written it in a more perfect way, and in order to have carried out the supporting research in a more detailed way, but I am overall quite satisfied with my work and how it has developed me into a professional ready to take on the working world.

I hope that my work will continue to help Study Advisory well into the future, and that it may also grant some insight to anyone who is interested in the general concept of customer satisfaction owith a focus on students.

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9 APPENDIX #1: STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Student Satisfaction Survey

Please fill out the following survey carefully. One randomly selected survey participant will **win an Amazon gift card valued at 100 Euros.**

What is the name of the university where you study or have studied? *

Your first name or alias (will be published) *

What is your nationality? *

Your E-mail address (will not be published) *

Your estimated year of graduation (4 digits) *

ex: 2013

Your estimated year of graduation (4 digits) *

ex: 2013

Did any traditional rankings of this university influence your decision to study at this university? *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

How would you rate the following areas of your university? *

	Very Bad	Bad	Ok	Good	Very Good
Teaching (the quality of the teaching and the content of courses)	○	○	○	○	○
Campus (the overall quality of the university campus)	○	○	○	○	○
Student Services (the quality of student services provided by the university)	○	○	○	○	○
Internationality (the overall international atmosphere of the university)	○	○	○	○	○
Value For Money (the quality of the university compared to tuition costs)	○	○	○	○	○
Safety (the general safety both in the university city and on campus)	○	○	○	○	○

Give some reasons for why you chose to rank the previous 6 areas the way you did. *

10 APPENDIX #2: HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION RESEARCH RESULTS

Country	University	Satisfaction Score	QS World University Rankings	THE World University Ranking	Academic Ranking of World Universities	CWTS Leiden Ranking
Finland	Åbo Akademi University	30,00				
Poland	Lodz University of Technology	30,00				
Mexico	Monterrey Center for Higher Learning of Design	30,00				
Singapore	Singapore Management University	30,00				
Greece	International Hellenic University	29,00	351			396
Kenya	Kenya Methodist University	29,00				
Germany	Kühne Logistics University	29,00				
Germany	University of Bremen	29,00				395
Rwanda	University of Kibungo	29,00				
Mexico	University of Las Américas, Puebla	29,00				
Italy	University of Milano-Bicocca	29,00				
Australia	Bond University	28,00				
Thailand	Chulalongkorn University	28,00				
Germany	European University Viadrina	28,00				
Canada	HEC Montreal	28,00	361			245
Hungary	International Business School	28,00				
Austria	MCI Management Center Innsbruck	28,00				224
Portugal	Nova School of Business	28,00				

	and Economics					
France	Pantheon-Assas University	28,00				
Latvia	The Latvian Academy of Culture	28,00				
Germany	University of Bayreuth	28,00				
USA	University of Evansville	28,00	253			695
Denmark	University of Southern Denmark	28,00				
Germany	Hochschule Aschaffenburg	27,50				373
Malaysia	University of Malaya	27,50				
Canada	University of Manitoba	27,50	146			567
Denmark	Copenhagen Business School	27,00				256
Germany	Deggendorf Institute of Technology	27,00				
Germany	Hochschule Furtwangen	27,00				
Hong Kong	Hong Kong Baptist University	27,00				
Germany	Reutlingen School of Theology	27,00	394	106		
Germany	Stralsund University of Applied Sciences	27,00				
USA	Texas State University	27,00				
Denmark	The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts	27,00				
UK	The University of Northampton	27,00				
USA	The University of Texas at San Antonio	27,00				
Ireland	Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin	27,00	281			197
Colombia	Universidad ICESI	27,00	78	160		106
Germany	Universitat Kassel	27,00				
Ireland	University of Limerick	27,00	102	81	61	304

UK	University of Lincoln	27,00				
Germany	University of Mannheim	27,00				
Canada	University of Sherbrooke	27,00				513
Sweden	Uppsala University	27,00				
Denmark	Technical University of Denmark	26,90	112	167		82
Sweden	Halmstad University College	26,50				
USA	Kansas State University	26,50				
Estonia	Tallinn University	26,50				388
Belgium	University of Leuven	26,30	82	35	90	71
Finland	HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences	26,21				
Finland	Lappeenranta University of Technology	26,12				
Slovakia	Comenius University in Bratislava	26,00				640
Sweden	Dalarna University	26,00				
USA	Eastern Oregon Universi-ty	26,00				
Germany	Flensburg University of Applied Sciences	26,00	356			
Germany	Goethe University Frank-furt	26,00				
Germany	Ingolstadt University of Applied Sciences	26,00				
China	Jinan University	26,00	66	37	46	146
Philippines	La Salle University	26,00				183
Czech Republic	Mendel University in Brno	26,00				
France	National Higher School of Aeronautics and Space	26,00				
Norway	Norwegian Business School	26,00				
Finland	Oulu University of Ap-plied Sciences	26,00				

Germany	Schmalkalden University of Applied Sciences	26,00				
Finland	Tampere University of Technology	26,00				
Hong Kong	The University of Hong Kong	26,00	30	44		272
Guatemala	Universidad Panameri-cana	26,00	233			188
Germany	Universitat Siegen	26,00				
Ireland	University College Cork	26,00				
USA	University of Delaware	26,00				710
Czech Republic	University of Economics, Prague	26,00				
Germany	University of Heidelberg	26,00				136
Germany	University of Hohenheim	26,00				
USA	Virginia College of Austin	26,00				
Estonia	Estonian Enterepreneur-ship Univesrity of Ap-plied Sciences	25,99				
Finland	University of Jyväskylä	25,68	319			362
Germany	Otto von Guericke Uni-versity of Magdeburg	25,67				451
Germany	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology	25,60				
Finland	Laurea University of Ap-plied Sciences	25,60	93	138		177
Germany	Hochschule fur Gestal-tung Schwabisch Gmund	25,59				
Austria	Johannes Kepler Univer-sitat Linz	25,52				
Finland	Saimaa University of Applied Sciences	25,40				
Finland	Savonia University of Applied Sciences	25,34				
Finland	JAMK University of Ap-plied Sciences	25,33				

Estonia	Tallinn University of Technology	25,25				
Finland	The University of Eastern Finland	25,19	347			398
Bosnia	Sarajevo School of Science and Technology	25,18				
Finland	Aalto University	25,10	139			350
Finland	University of Helsinki	25,02	96	76	67	233
Germany	BiTS - Business and Information Technology School	25,00				
Turkey	Boğaziçi University	25,00				
Austria	Ferdinand Porsche Fern FH	25,00				
Germany	Hochschule Pforzheim	25,00	75	29	52	110
Germany	Johannes Gutenberg-Universitat Mainz	25,00	210	94	97	174
France	Kedge Business School Marseille	25,00	331	156		225
Germany	Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich	25,00	375			203
Germany	Niederrhein University of Applied Sciences	25,00				
Germany	Osnabrck University of Applied Sciences	25,00				
Sweden	Stockholm University	25,00				
Austria	University of Applied Arts Vienna	25,00				
UK	University of Birmingham	25,00				660
Germany	University of Bonn	25,00	182	136	77	214
Germany	University of Cologne	25,00				
South Korea	Yeungnam University	25,00	76	119		164
Finland	Tampere University of Applied Sciences	24,98				
Hungary	University of Kaposvár	24,85				

Finland	University of Tampere	24,73				427
Finland	University of Turku	24,71	233			378
The Nether-lands	Fontys University of Ap-plied Sciences	24,50				
Germany	Humboldt University of Berlin	24,50	126	49		184
Finland	University of Vaasa	24,50				
Germany	Brandenburgische Tech-nische Universitat	24,36	358			435
Finland	University of Oulu	24,36				
Thailand	Prince of Songkla Univer-sity	24,26				
Germany	Augsburg University of Applied Sciences	24,00	153	142		215
USA	California State Universi-ty, Dominguez Hills	24,00	400			552
Germany	Fachhochschule Düssel-dorf	24,00				
South Korea	Gangneung-Wonju Na-tional University	24,00				
Finland	Hanken School of Eco-nomics	24,00	376			158
Germany	Hochschule Fulda	24,00		185		135
Finland	Karelia University of Applied Sciences	24,00	338	192		287
Germany	Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences	24,00	251			167
UK	Sussex Coast College Hastings	24,00				314
Uzbekistan	Tashkent State Universi-ty of Economics	24,00				
USA	Texas A&M University-Kingsville	24,00				
Estonia	The University of Tartu	24,00				
France	University of Montpellier	24,00				
Germany	University of Osnabruck	24,00				

Germany	University of Passau	24,00				
Germany	University of Potsdam	24,00				
Germany	University of Stuttgart	24,00				
Germany	University of Ulm	24,00				
Austria	University of Vienna	24,00				
Germany	University of Würzburg	24,00				
Lithuania	Vilnius University	24,00				
Switzerland	University of Italian Switzerland	23,89				
Finland	University of Lapland	23,75				
France	EM Strasbourg Business School	23,63				
Austria	Anton Bruckner Private University	23,58				
France	Kedge Business School	23,50				
Germany	University of Regensburg	23,50				139
Denmark	Aarhus University	23,00				
India	Andhra University	23,00	107	106	73	159
Germany	Berlin University of Applied Sciences	23,00				
Costa Rica	Costa Rica Institute of Technology	23,00	243			
Pakistan	Dr. A. Q. Khan Institute of Comupter Sciences and Infromation Technology	23,00				209
Estonia	Estonian Business School	23,00				
Germany	Frankfurt School of Finance and Management	23,00				
South Korea	Hankuk University of Foreign Studies	23,00				
Germany	Hochschule Hamm-Lippstadt	23,00				
Germany	Ludwigshafen University of Applied Sciences	23,00				
Germany	Padagogische	23,00				

	Hochschule Heidelberg					
Spain	Polytechnic University of Cartagena	23,00				
Germany	Regensburg University of Applied Sciences	23,00				
Germany	Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences	23,00				
Slovakia	Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra	23,00				
USA	University of California, Irvine	23,00				
Germany	University of Erfurt	23,00	105			644
Germany	University of Marburg	23,00				
Italy	University of Udine	23,00				
South Korea	Yonsei University	23,00	163	106	50	46
Germany	Hochschule Heilbronn	22,99				
France	University of Burgundy	22,95				352
Hungary	Széchenyi István University	22,92				
Indonesia	Udayana University	22,83				
Austria	University of Art and Design Linz	22,61				542
China	Beijing Jiaotong University	22,60				
Finland	Novia University of Applied Sciences	22,59				
Austria	New Design Private University	22,51				
Germany	University of Applied Science Koblenz	22,25				
Germany	University of Koblenz-Landau	22,17				
Pakistan	Bahauddin Zakariya University	22,00				
Germany	Fachhochschule Nordhausen	22,00				

Austria	FH Joanneum	22,00	331			602
Finland	Häme University of Applied Sciences	22,00				
Germany	Hochschule Emden/Leer	22,00				
Germany	Hochschule Hof	22,00				
Argentina	National University of Rosari	22,00				
Samoa	National University of Samoa	22,00				316
Brazil	Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro	22,00				
Italy	Universit degli Studi di Pavia	22,00				
Switzerland	University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland	22,00				
Pakistan	University of Engineering Technology, Lahore	22,00				
China	Xi'an Jiaotong University	22,00				
Romania	Spiru Haret University	21,85				
Thailand	Siam University	21,80				
Germany	HKS - University of Applied Sciences and Arts	21,72				
Ireland	Marino Institute of Education	21,65	219			181
Germany	University of Hamburg	21,60				
France	Montpellier Business School	21,51				
Italy	Ca' Foscari University of Venice	21,00				
Vietnam	CFVG Hanoi	21,00				
Ireland	Dublin Business School	21,00	292	123		161
Finland	Kymenlaakso University of Applied Sciences	21,00				
Denmark	Lillebaelt Academy Uni-	21,00				481

	versity of Applied Sci-ences					
USA	Salem State University	21,00				
USA	The University of Texas at Dallas	21,00				163
Germany	University of Erlangen Nuremberg	21,00				
Italy	University of Genoa	21,00				
Germany	Universitat der Kunste Berlin	20,56				
Finland	HUMAK University of Applied Sciences	20,38				
Germany	Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences	20,00	256	125		133
Germany	Dresden University of Applied Sciences	20,00				
USA	Felician College	20,00				
Germany	FH Köln	20,00				
Germany	Hochschule der Medien	20,00				
Italy	Lorenzo de Medici Italian International Institiue	20,00				
Germany	Ulm University of Ap-plied Sciences	20,00				
Germany	University of Münster	20,00				
Thailand	Kasetsart University	19,50	331			624
Malaysia	Universiti Putra Malaysia	19,50				
USA	Barry University	19,00				
Mexico	Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas	19,00				
Taiwan	I-Shou University	19,00				
Latvia	University of Latvia	19,00				
China	Yunnan University of Finance and Economics	19,00				
Pakistan	National College of Arts	18,00				
France	Paris West University Nanterre La Défense	18,00				324

Switzerland	School of Engineering and Business, Vaud	18,00				
Paraguay	Universidad del Norte	18,00				
Italy	University of Insubria	18,00				
Germany	University of Rostock	18,00				
Germany	University of Wuppertal	18,00				
China	Shanghai University	17,50				480
Germany	Berlin School of Economics and Law	17,00				
Spain	Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya	17,00				
The Netherlands	Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Professional Education	17,00				
Greece	Technological Educational Institute Of Peloponnese	17,00				
USA	Seton Hall University	15,00				
Tunisia	Tunis Private University	13,00				
China	Yunnan University	12,00				